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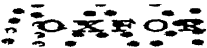
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ORDEAL

by

MUSIC

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 OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
AMEN HOUSE, E.C.4
London Edinburgh Glasgow New York
Toronto Melbourne Cape Town Bombay
Calcutta Madras
GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY

First Published, 1945
Reprinted . 1947

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
3544.6379

PREFACE

I FIRST became interested in Havergal Brian when writing *Music in the Five Towns*.¹ Brian had had some influence on the musical taste of the people of North Staffordshire during the Edwardian period, and had in return received some measure of recognition as a composer of choral and orchestral music of a high quality. When I tried to get in touch with him, however, for the purpose of gathering authentic information on his work, I met with the most extraordinary difficulty, for nobody remembered hearing anything of him since the European War of 1914, nor had anyone seen an obituary notice. Was it possible that a man could be acclaimed as a rising young composer in one generation and completely forgotten in the next? Neglected composers are no rarity in any period of modern history, but on close investigation one often finds that their neglect has been magnified by themselves and their biographers. Mozart, it is true, died in poverty, but *Le Nozze di Figaro* was popular at the time. Was Beethoven neglected? On the contrary, his admirers strove very hard to overcome difficulties in his music that were often too much for them. Of Havergal Brian's neglect, however, there can be no doubt, for of all those who had once acclaimed him only one remained—Sir Granville Bantock—whose persistent efforts to get Brian's works performed were of no avail. What has happened, too, to Bantock's own compositions? Why are they so rarely performed? The problem resolved itself into a study of the change of taste that came about during the 1914-18 war, and the effect of this on the personality of one man.

Yet this man could not be considered apart from his environment, for into oblivion with him went certain great ideals and organizations for the advancement of musical life in Britain. Ought the Musical League to have died as it did during a period when our national spirit was more on its mettle than ever before?

Closer investigation of Havergal Brian's life gradually unveiled a picture of an age that is to-day either forgotten or misunderstood: the age of 1880 to 1914, during which the struggle for recognition of British music was growing in intensity and the political prestige of this country was undergoing a severe strain from the increasing tension of our relations with the Emperor William II. Brian and his contemporaries were too close to the picture to see all its features in true perspective, and we, from our more distant viewpoint, will not agree with some of their conclusions, but they help to explain Brian's behaviour as a musician—a course of behaviour that will in turn help us, perhaps,

¹ Oxford University Press 1943.



HAVERGALL BRIAN

From a drawing by F. Furnivall, 1938

R. NETTEL

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BY MUSIC

*The Strange Experience of
Havergal Brian*

GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE
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Without Havergal Brian's assistance this book could not have been written, for he alone could tell the story set down in its pages. I have to thank him for so patiently answering innumerable questions, and for revising the proofs. There are gaps and errors in the best of memories, however, and I am therefore indebted to Sir Granville Bantock for the loan of his collection of Brian's letters going back some forty years, and to Mr. J. Mewburn Levien also for the loan of letters. Chapter XIV, 'The World of Arnold Bennett', gets its atmosphere from the pages of *The New Age*, a publication now no longer appearing, to our great loss, for there is no paper to-day which so brings together the thought of our times as that paper did of Edwardian times. Lady Helen Bantock has kindly given me permission to print her poem *Soul Star* and passages from *The Great God Pan*. To Mr. Joseph Holbrooke I am indebted for permission to quote three short passages from his book *Contemporary Composers*, and to Lord Alfred Douglas for permission to quote from his poems *To Olive* and *Wine of Summer*.

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R. NETTEL

January 1945

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FONS ET ORIGO

FULFORD is not shown on any but the largest maps, nor has the village a railway station. It lies in a maze of narrow lanes three miles south of Draycott-in-the-Moors, which village in turn lies on the Longton-Uttoxeter road about equidistant from Longton in the city of Stoke-on-Trent, and Cheadle, a small market town in the moorlands to the north. Fulford consists of a few farms and cottages grouped round a fine old stone church, standing as it has stood for centuries and still remote from the din and bustle of the modern world. A visitor might pause in this church and feel that time has here wrought no change; outside, the rhythm of the years swings now to spring-time, now to harvest, June to bleak December, the bud to the yellow leaf, but inside Fulford Church the arches stand as they were set when men thought much of their parish and rarely of the world that lay beyond the nearest market town.

Yet the visitor would be wrong to ignore the organ, a sign of change, surely, for as little as a hundred years ago it was not there. Far off in that outside world a spirit had moved in an otherwise somnolent town; from the pulpit of St. Mary's in Oxford spoke Keble, Newman and Pusey, and throughout the land the English Church awoke to its responsibilities; out from our parish church choirs went the old instrumentalists, and in their place came surplices and fine altar-cloths, organs and skilled organists. The passing of those honest fellows from the minstrel's gallery to the nave is a wistful story, and beautiful, as Thomas Hardy tells it in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, but the coming of the new and finer choirs is a grander story still, and it has not yet been so interestingly told.

In Fulford for many generations the music had been played by members of two families—the Clewlovs and the Jenkinsons. They played with equal felicity in the parish church or the local inn, and there was much intermarriage between them. When the organ appeared in the church, only the inn and their own homes were left to play in, except at Christmas-time, when it was but one's Christian duty to keep the feast and play the old immortal carols round the parish. Their former prestige could not be regained once they had been superseded in the church services, but a love of music will not die from loss of dignity—they kept their faith.

Five miles away, in Cheadle, the new spirit emanating from Oxford began to take practical effect. Classes gathered in the parish church to practise singing and chanting; other churches

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CHILDHOOD

I

WILLIAM HAVERGAL BRIAN was born at Dresden in the parish of Trentham, Staffordshire, on 29 January 1876. The parish of Trentham was in the rural district of Stone, which lies half way between the industrial centre of the Potteries and the county town of Stafford.

That is how Dresden people liked to think of themselves in 1876—half county and half industrial, with the reservation that whenever a point of social prestige was involved they were definitely of the county and outside the boundary of the Borough of Longton, two miles or so away. In the borough they worked and did their shopping—in the county they lived and paid their rates. Nor could there be any better way of earning and living in those parts in those days, for to live in Longton was an ordeal to be contemplated by the stoical or the unfortunate, but never by the truly wise. By the persistent exercise of this wisdom more and more people migrated to Dresden from Longton, until it was impossible to tell where one ended and the other began, and at last *de facto* embodiment of the village in the borough, and of the borough in the larger community of the Potteries towns, led to *de jure* fusion into the County Borough of Stoke-on-Trent, and in due course, through a labyrinth of political activity, to the proud title of city. But all this is so very much *de jure*; to this day no Longton man thinks of himself as a citizen of Stoke, or of Fenton, Hanley, Burslem or Tunstall—they are places he visits on occasion, and that is all.

These political fictions, however, had not been dreamed of in 1876. Dresden was still a village and a Sabbath day's journey from Longton. Life centred round the village church, and to the village school young Brian went at the age of three, and there remained until 1886, when he was removed from the village school to St. James's Parish School at Longton, there to remain for two years, leaving school for ever at the age of twelve to take his place in a world of deeds.

Such was the normal educational life of a working-man's son in those days. Nor is it possible to regard Havergal Brian as other than a descendant of typical working people of that time and that district. Both his parents worked in Longton pot-banks (the local name for pottery factories). His father's hobby was horticulture, in which he was a successful prize-winner at the Crystal Palace and numerous other important flower shows; so horticulture

the times; together they found themselves an imposing and influential body, numerous enough to have their music printed locally and to organize singing festivals, using combined choirs of a hundred singers, in their churches. The name they took was 'The Cheadle Association for the Improvement of Church Music'. The Bishop of Lichfield approved the scheme heartily, and in 1856 organized the first Diocesan Choral Festival in which church choirs from all over the Lichfield diocese combined to do the same thing on a larger scale. In time the Diocesan Choral Festival movement spread until it reached throughout the land and to our colonies overseas.

Long before this, and while the old minstrels still had their place in Fulford Church, one of the female Clewlowes married a Watson and migrated to the village of Dresden, some four miles to the west; her daughter sang in Dresden Church choir, and in some of the Lichfield Diocesan Choral Festivals; there she met and married Benjamin Brian, a pottery worker, by whom she had three children, with the eldest of whom, William Havergal, we are concerned in this biography.

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formed the main topic of conversation in the Brian home. But there was a second theme that came up sometimes—music: both father and mother had sung before their marriage in the village choir, and they talked of the great days they had enjoyed together at the Lichfield Diocesan Choral Festivals. Work occupied so much of their time, however (and horticulture and housework had to be done in the evenings), that regular attendance at choir rehearsals had to be discontinued after their marriage, and memories of their former musical triumphs lingered as joys that had had to be sacrificed to the more important duties of home-making. But when the boy Havergal grew to an age when he could be taken out of an evening—which happened about the age of three or four—they took him with them to a singing class conducted by a pottery manufacturer named Aidney. Such classes were a popular feature of life in working-class districts in those days; the notation used was tonic sol-fa, and each member of the class was given a brown-paper cover, with pins, into which the music could be inserted easily. A new copy of music was handed out at the class, pinned into the cover and paid for on the spot. The cost of sol-fa copies would be no more than one or two coppers. Here Havergal Brian learned the now almost forgotten glees of Webbe and Spofforth.

More important was the fact that at so early an age he became familiar with the practice of part-singing; his earliest musical memories were of moving vocal parts, learning the parts by ear, for he was yet too young to read. Music came to him as an enjoyable aural exercise, and not as a scholastic subject. Except for the early experiences of the singing-class, however, music remained a fascinating mystery to the boy until his tenth year, when removal to St. James's School in Longton widened his educational opportunities. This school had a great reputation among elementary schools in the Midlands, and music was one of its most successful subjects.¹ It was practically a school for choristers. With that facility with which an enthusiastic schoolmaster can make a cold curriculum warm to his life's interest, James Edwin Smith brightened the lives of his staff and pupils at St. James's with music. He himself was both schoolmaster and church choirmaster, all his staff were choristers at St. James's and the trebles were chosen from among his scholars. Voice-training was intensive; the boys were taught to sing solo before the assembled school, without accompaniment, taking their note from a tuning-fork. They were taught to read staff notation in days when tonic sol-fa was a positive craze in elementary schools. The

¹ Leveson Myatt became principal tenor at Chester Cathedral, Tom Ratcliffe (bass) went to Bristol Cathedral, and George Vyse (alto) became Lay Vicar and Schoolmaster of the choir boys at York Minster. All from St. James's.

musical reputation of the school was known to the boy Havergal even before he was sent there as a scholar. 'The only thing I lived for when I entered that school', writes Brian, 'was the first music lesson, and it was given by a teacher named George Goodwin.' Such was the boy's enthusiasm that he rapidly advanced from the musically backward state in which he entered the school until in three months he was chosen to fill a vacancy that occurred in the church choir. His progress continued so that in a short time he became solo boy, well versed in the anthems of Calkin, Barnby, Dykes and Stanford.

II

An outstanding event of those days was the Queen Victoria Jubilee Celebrations of 1887. There was a great Festival Service arranged to be held in Lichfield Cathedral, and the choir of St. James's, Longton, attended, together with church choirs from all over the Lichfield Diocese. Havergal's excitement as the day drew near became so intense that on the night before the festival he could not sleep; at three in the morning he was out of bed, out of doors, and wandering about the lanes near his home. The succeeding day was extremely hot—so hot that the choristers were not allowed to go out in the sun, but were led in procession round the cathedral close under the shade of the surrounding trees. In later years he was surprised to find that Lichfield Cathedral was by no means so big as his childish imagination had pictured it on that day, and it is certain that this early experience of taking part for the first time in a great festival in one of our loveliest cathedrals, had a profound influence on the boy's psychological development. Certain details stood out vividly: the exquisite grace of the cathedral—his first view of medieval English architecture—seen from his place in one of the transepts, with the orchestra arranged in the chancel and singers placed everywhere within vision, taking their time from sub-conductors following the direction of the cathedral organist, John B. Lott, who occupied a central position before the orchestra. The impression that remained on Brian's mind was of these particular details standing out from a general background of awe-inspiring grandeur; the Gothic columns around him springing out their pointed arches high above his head, the rich colouring of the glass, and the swelling up of the music from a thousand trained voices: all these fanned his childish wonder and were imprinted on his subconscious mind as he slept.

Yes, slept. The cathedral was hot, and the boy had been awake all the night before. He slept, and whenever he awoke it was to see the woolly head of a black boy before him—a treble from Tamworth Parish Church. It was all fantastic to Brian. He would awaken from his doze to be aware again of a vast encompassing

world of musical and architectural beauty: the Gothic arches rang with the music of Stainer and Handel; most impressive of all was a *Te Deum* for choir and full orchestra composed by the Prince Consort; Brian was enthralled by the sounds. Years after the festival had receded to a distant memory he kept the music of Prince Albert's *Te Deum* and would play it as a voluntary, for, long before his voice broke, he became deputy organist at St. James's Church, Longton.

YOUTH

I

ALTHOUGH the appointment of Havergal Brian as deputy organist at St. James's while he was still a singing boy was at first convenient for the organist there, Brian's progress under the tuition of a rival organist, Bertram Walker, of St. Gregory's Church,¹ made the older organist jealous, and he took to various forms of obstruction, one of which was to 'lose' the key of the organ to prevent Brian from practising. When, therefore, the post of organist at Holy Trinity Church, Meir, became vacant through the sudden disappearance of its previous occupant, Havergal applied for this post, and greatly to his relief succeeded in obtaining it.

The appointment brought him a salary of £12 a year, which seemed to the boy at that time to be great wealth. This money he used to pay for music lessons under a musician of considerable local reputation named Theophilus Hemming. Brian was now in his fifteenth year. With Hemming he worked through Sir Charles Hallé's *Pianoforte School*, through Mendelssohn, Merkel, Rheinberger and a great deal of Bach at the organ, and through Prout's *Harmony* and Cherubini's *Counterpoint* on paper. He did two hours' practice every evening at the keyboard, and kept up his interest in reading as well, picking up what information he could of musical affairs abroad and taking a keen interest in those of his own district.

Hemming was an examination coach and nothing else. He seems to have been unable to adapt his methods to the psychological needs of his young pupil. Originally Hemming had been organist of Stoke-on-Trent Parish Church, but after a quarrel with the rector he had resigned and built a school in that town. It was a success until the opening of the local High Schools reduced the number of its pupils from one hundred boys to thirty. Hemming then dismissed his staff and carried on the school with the sole help of his eldest daughter. Since scholars had now grown so hard

¹ Actually Havergal had two teachers: Bertram Walker and the organ blower. The latter was an amateur musician who had been blinded in a colliery accident; he earned a meagre living by pumping St. Gregory's organ and by playing the pianoforte in public houses on wage-nights. He knew Rinck's *Organ School* from cover to cover. Time might be lost in fumbling with a drawstop; from behind the organ case would come the sound of the blower's voice counting—one—two—three—four; perhaps the learner would make a pedal fault—('Don't look at your feet, ever, if you want to make a good organist', said Walker, so occasionally a foot would come down on a wrong note); from behind the organ would come a violent rattling of the pump-handle, and if Havergal did not go back to the offending bar and play it properly, the wind-pressure would begin to fall.

to get, he made a speciality of coaching musicians for examinations, with not a little success. But he had no interest in music except an academic interest; he corrected Brian's faults in keyboard technique, and drilled him well in theory.

The new organ post at Holy Trinity Church, Meir, took Brian away from the influences of his schooldays, but in the new surroundings he found a true friend in the vicar. The Rev. (afterwards Canon) Thomas Heywood Masters was a keen musician and played the pianoforte well; he introduced Brian to the works of Schumann and Chopin, and encouraged him to explore the musical press for information concerning modern developments in music. So it came about that Brian discovered the charm of Grieg, whose compositions were just beginning to appear in this country from the German publishing houses: Brian bought Grieg's pianoforte works as fast as they became available. But Canon Masters tried to do more. He was a Cambridge man and a friend of Stanford, having gone with that composer to Hanover for the first performance of *The Veiled Prophet*. Masters offered to coach Brian for an organ scholarship at St. John's College, Cambridge, but Brian's father would not entertain the idea; before everything else he owed it to his son to see that he had 'a trade in his fingers'. How he set about this most worthy object is shown in a letter written by his son to Sir Granville Bantock some thirty years later.

'As a boy and youth I was kicked about from pillar to post, eventually rising to the high calling of apprentice-joiner with a jobbing master. I was kicked out of every job—for doing what I was not paid for. I remember the jobbing master going to my father and telling him that I shouldn't make a joiner—I thought too much of music! I really think I should have forgotten all this but for a death notice in the *Staffs. Sentinel* which reached me this morning. The jobbing master's yard stood within a larger yard belonging to a neighbouring potbank from which all the rubbish in the way of old boxes, old iron wheelbarrows, etc., found its way. Our workshops consisted of a long range of lean-to buildings running from a high wall which ran parallel with the street footpath. Our workshop was the first of the lean-to buildings, the others behind consisted of stables and an open shed.

'My first work was to use a rip saw and rip long boards down lines which were marked for me, or I might be given a tough board or scantling full of knots, which no one else would "face", and I was expected to reduce it to decency with an old jack plane. Or I might have to stand a whole morning turning the wheel of a grindstone whilst a journeyman joiner would prepare his knives, incidentally telling me all the latest lewd gossip, wasting his master's time and chewing tobacco. Much of my work consisted of pushing a hand-cart about the town with an odd window-pane and sash, or a door frame, from the workshops to various jobs in the town.

'After doing some weeks truck pushing, ripsawing, etc., my master thought I should have some tools of my own, and after seeing my father

on the matter I was taken to an ironmonger's shop and fitted out with a tool basket, jack and smoothing planes, cross-cut saw, tenon saw, tri-square, chisels, etc. I was a proud boy. It wasn't to last long, however.

'There was a tall chap in the joiner's shop who played the piano and concertina in "pubs" at night, who had been a soldier in a Lancers regiment, and who was a "devil". He stimulated my madness for music—and it started in this way. I was mad in those days to become a great organist. I used to walk miles to hear Peace give a recital, and in returning would run my mind over contrasts: "Peace is now such an age, I'm only twelve, I've plenty of time to be as fine as he is when I'm his age."

'So, as chorister I taught myself the organ, got permission to practise on the parish church organ, only to be stopped later altogether because I travelled too fast for the organist.

'With my organ madness must come craving for organ music. I would compose it. I had to plane long 11 inch white deal boards, which were afterwards cut off at 5 ft. 6 ins., ironed at the end, and used in the potworks for carrying cups or anything in a raw state from shops to ovens. I had to smooth these boards with a smoothing plane. I gloated over the white surface—how beautiful it looked. An inspiration came! I got a T-square and drew down a long white board ledger lines, in pencil, and set to work writing organ marches—anything which came into my head. I soon covered up a number of boards in this way, and my pub-piano-player coach rubbed his hands with glee and in an enthusiastic moment fetched the son of the proprietor of the potbank, who also leased the yard to my jobbing master. I remember him coming—looking over the boards covered with organ marches, waltzes, etc., and saying, "What a pity he cannot be better employing his time than pushing a plane and a hand-cart." This man often came across to me during the breakfast hour or dinner hour and certainly took a deeper interest in my juvenile effort than has been shown in any of those of my manhood. I remember that kind face so full of sympathy.

'The climax came through my boss's going to look at some work in the country. As soon as he had turned his back (he was supposed to be out for the day), I rushed off for the key of the parish church organ, and took my soldier pub-piano-player to the church to blow for me. We were there for hours. My soldier was too fond of the noise to feel any fatigue in blowing. With tobacco in his mouth, he would sometimes shout from behind as I finished a piece—mostly marches or postludes from Rinck's organ school—"Let's have that again—this time with all the bloody stops out."

'So the time went on and when we were both tired we returned to the shop, surprised to find the jobbing master awaiting us. Of course, the joiner was sacked, and as a conspirator in our absence had shown him all the 11-in. boards covered with music in pencil I didn't last there many days longer. He sent for my father, showed him the boards, told him how I interfered with the men in his absence and eventually sent me home in my corduroys with my tool-basket over my shoulder.'

BEGINNINGS IN COMPOSITION

DESPITE the failure of the organ adventure, Brian would not be put off from his proposal to make a livelihood by music.

The proposal was opposed by his father on the usual grounds that music offered no sinecure to anybody. Professional musicians he knew, but they were all greatly overworked and few earned much if anything above the poverty line. Besides, his son's ideas of music were becoming difficult to understand: the kind of music he liked was not popular enough to form the basis of a livelihood. Handel was popular, but Havergal was not drawn towards Handel, preferring Bach. He also talked of a man named Berlioz and someone named Wagner. Benjamin Brian, too, had on various occasions been persuaded by his son to hear music which he could not understand. He liked to attend the performances of the Carl Rosa Opera Company when they visited Longton, and as his son had recommended a comic opera called *The Mastersingers* he had gone to see it. Only it didn't make sense: 'Where is it funny?' he asked on his return. There were two young Italians, said Havergal on another occasion, Mascagni and Leoncavallo, who had written operas in a new style that greatly differed from the work of men like Rossini and Verdi, and they were to be performed in Longton. Benjamin saw *I Pagliacci* and was more mystified than ever: 'Call that music?' he said. 'I call it noise.' Unless, therefore, Havergal's opinions underwent a sudden change, he would have little chance of making a living by his music.

Nor was Theophilus Hemming any more encouraging. Hemming had had a tough time, and any sentiment he may have had for music as a fine art had long since been knocked out of him. He was a perpetual grumbler; every week Havergal had to listen to his tale of misfortune, and it never varied. The Education Acts were his grievance; all his losses were attributed to the parliamentary passion for secondary education. In addition, he, a pupil of Ouseley, had practically been turned out of his church by a parson who knew nothing of music. He emphasized the value of a musical degree as the first step towards success in the musical profession. 'Here we were at loggerheads', writes Havergal Brian, 'for I argued that such things were stupid—that Berlioz, Wagner and Liszt were neither Mus. Docs nor F.R.C.O.s. Each week there was the same wrangle. Finally he asked me what I wanted to be. I said, "A composer and nothing more." Off he fired that composers were not wanted and more composers were unnecessary. "Mozart was the greatest of all composers—study his life and see

how they crucified him. Bah!" When I mentioned Berlioz, he regarded me as gone and lost for ever.'

The result of these interviews was that Havergal Brian pasted the portraits of Berlioz and Wagner on his bedroom wall and swore that despite anything Hemming said, he would become their disciple—and he did.

In his eighteenth year, therefore, Havergal Brian gave up his work and spent all his time at music. The experiment lasted only about a year, for his father never agreed that such a course was desirable, and there were constant arguments in the home on his son's obstinacy. Havergal spent six hours a day in practising at the pianoforte, and as much time as he could at composition. One day in each week, besides Sundays, he spent at the church organ. By this time he had given up his post at Holy Trinity Church in order to take a vacancy that occurred at Odd Rode Parish Church, just over the Cheshire border and about twenty miles from where he lived. This church appealed to him because of its isolated position and the fact that no restrictions were put on the time he spent practising.

The choirmaster at Odd Rode was named Arthur Bailey, a keen singer and a member of the Talke and District Prize Choir which, although hailing from a colliery village, was proving itself practically invincible in competitive singing festivals all over the country. Brian and Bailey were soon great friends, for their interest in the more recent developments in music drew them together. At Odd Rode Brian was happier than he had been in any of his previous church appointments.

He still kept up his tuition however under Hemming (irksome though this man's opinions were) for he was the best teacher Brian could afford, and he attended at his house in Stoke-on-Trent one evening each week. It was while returning from one of these lessons that an experience befell him that was to change the whole course of his life. It happened as he was passing the end of the street in which stood Stoke Town Hall.

'A choral rehearsal was on and I heard music that held me spell-bound—it was unlike any known to me. At that time I was organist of Odd Rode Parish Church in Cheshire. On the following Sunday I told my choirmaster of my experience with this unknown strange music. He said: "Oh, I was there—it was the chorus of the North Staffordshire Triennial Festival and we were rehearsing a work by a new chap named Elgar—called *King Olaf*. It is strange music and we don't understand it." He said: "We are not supposed to lend our copies, but I will bring mine for evening service and you can look at it during the sermon." I carried that copy home. By the time of the performance I had borrowed it incessantly and knew it backwards. I regarded Elgar as a phenomenon and spent my time gaining converts. Its production was on a cold October morning—I was there with two

others whom I had fired with my own enthusiasm. There were a number of contretemps—the most serious was that Lloyd was not at the final rehearsal owing to a train error. The soprano was Medora Henson—Edward Lloyd was at the top of his form and Ffrangcon Davies was a fine looking fellow with a mop of curly hair. Willy Hess was the leader of the orchestra. The unknown Elgar walked on to conduct his work in a light woolly suit and was obviously fidgety and nervous. I still believe there is no music so instantly arresting as those opening bars of *King Olaf*, where the 'cellos continue a rising and falling figure, sequential as is Elgar's wont. When Lloyd sang "And King Olaf heard the cry", something went wrong—subsequently Hess saw that Elgar was losing his grip. Hess jumped to his feet and straightened the thing out by his presence and his bow. He saved *King Olaf*. Elgar admitted it to me years afterwards: "But for Willy Hess, what a fiasco that performance would have been!" At that time Hess was the personification of Svengali, and I often wonder if he did inspire writers. Those fiery eyes and black beard—for there is a Black Fiddler in the novel by Gottfried Keller from which Delius obtained his "Village Romeo and Juliet".

Brian eventually got Elgar's address from Bailey, and wrote to him, enclosing for criticism an anthem he had composed and asking Elgar's advice as to the best way to get tuition.

Elgar's reply was guarded but encouraging. He said the anthem was original if somewhat involved, and that Brian should keep on composing. As for tuition, Elgar could offer no advice: 'For my part,' he wrote, 'I have had to get on without it, but I am afraid this will be cold comfort to you.'

Cold comfort indeed! It was inspiration. Elgar was self-taught and he had written *King Olaf*. Here was the answer to Hemming and his sort. Brian gave his mind more and more to composition from that time onwards. Before the nineteenth century closed he had written three songs, settings of Longfellow's *I Shot an Arrow*, Goethe's *Wanderer's Night Song* (Henry Morley's translation) and *Today and Tomorrow* by Gunby Hadath, a *Requiem* for Baritone Solo, Chorus and Orchestra—words from the New Testament and *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, and a short symphonic movement called *Pantalón and Columbine*.

They were written without any prospect of performance, and the orchestral scores were written without Brian's having any chance of hearing how they would actually sound in performance. But they had to be written, just the same.

A work for full orchestra entitled *Tragic Prelude* brought a deeper tint into Brian's work that was continued in his compositions for the following year, 1901. These comprise three songs for voice and pianoforte: *Sorrow Song*, the words by Samuel Daniel, *The Message*, to a poem by John Donne, and a setting of Bishop Heber's *Farewell*. None of these poets was at all well

known in the Staffordshire Potteries, where the prevailing taste lay in the works of Longfellow and Tennyson. Brian was not necessarily an iconoclast, but he was forming his own tastes. The fourth work of that year was a setting of the 23rd Psalm for tenor solo, chorus (S.A.T.B.) and orchestra. He was still a church organist, and not yet completely divorced from the traditional style of the English Church in his choral writing, but his orchestral style was from the first quite distinctive; owing nothing to orthodox teaching it could not be otherwise—its faults were his own, and its originality inevitable. The first of the three songs was written in the reading room of the Free Library at Stoke—and a more unromantic spot it would be difficult to find—while with the other two Brian made his first bow to the public. They were sung by Miss Grainger Kerr at a Meakin concert in Hanley.

THE PROVINCIAL SCENE

HARDLY had Havergal Brian arrived to take his place for the first time at the organ of Holy Trinity Church, Meir, than he was visited by a tall, lanky-looking man in his early twenties. He had all the quaintness of a Dickensian character, with steel-rimmed spectacles on the end of his nose. He explained that his name was Tom Jenkinson, he played the 'cello and he understood that he was distantly related to Brian on his mother's side, and he invited Brian to tea.

When Havergal Brian arrived in response to Jenkinson's invitation, he found a string quartet in being. Tom Jenkinson was playing the 'cello, his father and uncle the two violins, and his brother the viola. The two violinists had long black beards, and in the course of the playing they changed fiddles, Jenkinson *père* saying: 'I think I'll play this movement on the Duke.' It was years afterwards when Havergal Brian learned that Richard Duke was the name of a famous English violin maker. Fiddles hung about the walls like pictures: these people were independent of concert halls, opera-houses and all the expensive appurtenances of city music-making, but their lives were full of music.

Among Brian's contemporaries in Longton were not a few other serious instrumentalists. Leonard Brough became principal clarinet in the Hallé Orchestra under Richter, and another of Brian's friends, Robert Pantling, became an excellent oboe player and in due course migrated to Birmingham.¹ His remarkable tone was due to the peculiar shape of his lips and his skill in making his own reeds. He had served his apprenticeship with a local organ builder, and took to the oboe for fun, but the fascination of orchestral playing led him to turn his hobby into his profession. Both these men got their tuition from players in the orchestra of the Carl Rosa Opera Company, travelling whenever possible to the town where the company was appearing, and returning the same day. There are no academies of music in the Potteries even to this day, but when travelling facilities were far less easy than they are now, men found it possible to journey to another town for a single music lesson. Modern youth has no such enthusiasm, but it has very superior ideas about opera in English which it has hardly ever seen.

The Carl Rosa Opera Company in those days was something that had to be seen to be believed. Its chief glory was its chorus, but it carried a good orchestra, and many fine solo singers appeared on its bills at one time or another. Eugene Goossens (the first)

¹ His son is now second oboe in the B.B.C. Orchestra.

conducted all their German and English operas and Claude Jacquinot conducted their French and Italian operas. In the orchestra were such men as Lalo, their principal flautist, Dubreucq, oboe, Gomez, clarinet, and Lalande, bassoon. (Pantling had lessons from Dubreucq and Brough from Gomez.)¹ Amongst soloists Havergal Brian heard Marie Roze, Zélie de Lussan, Alice Estey, Fanny Moody, Ella Russell, Philip Brozel, John Child, Aynsley Cook, Alec Marsh, William Paul, William Ludwig and Charles Manners, all in the Queen's Theatre, Longton, when a boy.

Two of Carl Rosa's soloists, Charles Manners, bass, and Fanny Moody, soprano, married and formed an opera company of their own which never attained the eminence of the Carl Rosa Company, but kept the lamp of opera burning in England right up to the time of the first Great War. The Moody-Manners Company started its career in Longton, rehearsing for weeks at the Queen's Theatre before the curtain went up for their first performance. Havergal Brian spent many hours at these rehearsals watching the operas take shape. Eugene Goossens the second (son of the Carl Rosa Goossens and father of Eugene Goossens the composer) was conductor, and one rehearsal in particular Brian remembers where everything went wrong. The opera was *La Poupée de Nuremberg* by Adolphe Adam, and the band parts had been carelessly copied: the conductor had to stop every few bars in order to make corrections. Novelties were not so often introduced by Moody-Manners as they were by Carl Rosa; the general policy was to pack the theatre by performing the most popular operas for four nights out of six, and introduce two lesser-known operas on the remaining nights, but if a list were compiled of operas by British composers tried out by these companies it would be surprisingly long—and dejecting.

Charles Manners retired from the stage while opera was still in demand in industrial districts, but Carl Rosa carried on even when the fantastic social conditions after the Great War overwhelmed opera as they did so many other things.

The original Carl Rosa was one of that body of foreign musicians to whom we owe so much for the development of musical art in this country. There may have been something of Mendelssohn's Roamer in him, thinking:

*But pity I have come to show
And teach you rustics all I know*

but he stuck to opera through good times and bad, and achieved an artistic standard that is notably lacking to-day. The doom of opera on tour was sealed when the young became so wise.

¹ The orchestra was augmented by local players, the leader travelling each day to the town where the company was to appear the following week and conducting rehearsals there.

Always there had been the superior critic who made comparisons between a travelling opera company and the State opera-houses of the Continent, but in later years the ardent advocate of British music grew in influence. These were not new enemies, but combined with the economic seesaw of the post-war years they greatly depressed travelling opera.

Patriotism and economics—they were never absent from the fight for music, but few people were able to tell how the battle went from year to year. Always there was a steady flow of artists and compositions from abroad coming to our shores to make money out of the unmusical Britisher. They took our money, went back to their own countries, and scoffed at us. It was a situation hard to bear by the British musician, but his influence was for a long time of no avail against the main body of the concert-going public, who flocked to hear foreign artists but would not cross the road to hear a musician with a British name. Fortunately for British music, foreign artists who came to make money were all expensive, and their operations were confined to wealthy districts. London naturally got the full weight of their attacks. But the poor and inaccessible districts were reasonably free from the visiting foreigner, and, being thrown on their own resources, encouraged British artists and listened to the doctrine that they taught—'British music has been good in the past, and can be so again if it is cultivated.'

North Staffordshire was not a wealthy place, and foreign musicians rarely thought it worth their while to visit the district before 1887. But in that year a stimulus was given to the art by the provision of an excellent concert hall in Hanley, followed in 1889 by a fund to provide high-class concerts at a price working people could afford. Brian was then in his last schooldays, and embarking on his career as an organist, so that the experiences of the Lichfield Cathedral Festival, the Jenkinsons, the Carl Rosa Company, the North Staffordshire Triennial Festivals, and the Meakin concerts all came to him in the course of about three years. There was no dearth of musical adventure; the mystery is that he was able to absorb it all at so young an age.

The North Staffordshire Triennial Festival of 1896, when Elgar's *King Olaf* was produced, has already been referred to. The first festival was in 1888, but Brian did not attend this: he attended that of 1893, however, when Berlioz' *Damnation of Faust* and Smart's *Bride of Dunkerron* were performed. The policy of Dr. Swinnerton Heap, the conductor, was to widen the outlook of his singers and audience by mixing the best foreign works with contemporary British works. Heap was the second holder of the Mendelssohn Scholarship and one of the most able conductors in the country. He had been trained in the shadow of the Birming-

ham festivals as a boy, under Reinecke, Moscheles and F. Richter in Leipzig, and under W. T. Best as an organist. He held to the Leipzig tradition. 'Schumann is the last of the great composers', he told Brian, and at the time he said it he was rehearsing Brahms' *Song of Destiny*. Wagner he disliked. Parry, Stanford and Mackenzie he admired most among British composers before his discovery of Elgar. Heap was a great man: great as an organizer, as a conductor, and in his breadth of mind. Years after Heap's death, writing to J. Mewburn Levien, who was secretary of the Royal Philharmonic Society, Havergal Brian said: 'What was the old Phil doing to miss such a genius? Cowen, Mackenzie and Co. weren't within a thousand miles of Heap—who died unknown outside the Midlands.'

The question arises, why did Havergal Brian go to Theophilus Hemming for tuition when Heap was available in the district? The answer is that Brian could not afford Heap's fees. But under the influence of Heap's performances at the triennial festivals and with the Stoke Philharmonic Society, Brian revelled in Schumann, Schubert and Beethoven until 1896, when the glamour of Elgar drove them all into the background. In the same week that he heard *King Olaf* he heard Dvořák's *Spectre's Bride* and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* at Heap's festival concerts in Hanley; in that week, too, he heard William Ludwig sing the name part in *The Flying Dutchman* with the Carl Rosa Company. There was plenty of music to be heard by those who were interested and able to afford the cost.

By this time Havergal Brian's means had improved. He gave up his attempt to earn a living by teaching music after about a year, at his father's repeated requests, and after a few months with a colliery firm by whom he had previously been employed, he transferred his interest to a firm of timber merchants, with whom he remained two years. He was left very much to himself by this firm; provided his duties were carried out satisfactorily he was under very little supervision.

This was the period when he turned to orchestral music. His schoolboy dislike of the violin vanished when he heard the orchestra of Elgar's *King Olaf*; he joined an amateur orchestra as second violin, and began to learn the 'cello. Again, however, the parental veto was imposed, this time because he used to arrive home so late at night after rehearsals. But it provided him with much valuable experience. There he saw a player on the natural horn—the valveless horn for which the classical composers wrote—with crooks for the different keys arranged in a semi-circle on the floor round the player's feet. There were amateur orchestral societies all over the district in those days, but they rarely risked giving concerts, preferring to meet regularly for their own amuse-

ment in the rehearsal room. Amateur orchestral playing was frowned upon by audiences—not without reason.

These dilettante rehearsals gave him an insight to the practical side of orchestral playing, but they did nothing to fan the passion for great orchestral music which had been kindled at the *King Olaf* performance. Local concerts were nearly all choral; there were, however, visits from the Hallé Orchestra to the Meakin concerts at Hanley, conducted by the great Hans Richter, but they were few and far between. In order to hear the Hallé Orchestra more often Brian had to travel to Manchester on Thursdays—when he should be at work in the timber-merchant's office—and the ruse he adopted to gain this end is an indication of the hold that orchestral music was beginning to exert upon him. He would go to the cashier, draw ten shillings on account of his wages and depart towards the back of the firm's premises. There was no exit this way, but he could climb a fence unobserved that gave access to the towing-path of the Trent and Mersey Canal; following this he would cross the canal by a lock bridge and reach the railway station through a goods-yard. All this was trespass, but it was done because it enabled him to reach the station without going down any street, where he might be seen. The ten shillings paid his fare to Manchester, a shilling for admission to the Free Trade Hall, a supper of steak and chips at Lockhart's and an annotated programme.

These annotated programmes were written by a young man named Ernest Newman.

'For me', writes Brian, '“E.N.” has had an enormous influence. In my early years his writings gave me stimulus and courage. In the days of his analytical notes for the Hallé Society his weekly notes in their programmes must have influenced thousands of Manchester people. One of the most striking things I read of this sort was E.N.'s analysis of Beethoven's 5th Symphony. I remember standing many a night in the throng that crowded the steps leading to the circle of the Free Trade Hall, when every man and woman was studying the analytical notes of the programme whilst waiting for the doors to open. I have also stood in the snow and rain for a couple of hours in Peter Street or Windmill Street—waiting for a standing-up place at the back of the Arena. Price of ticket 1/- . So did I hear Tschaiikovski's No. 6 for the first time under Richter.'

Under Richter's influence Richard Strauss was added to Brian's heroes—Berlioz and Wagner—and under his influence, too, Ernest Newman wrote his authoritative books, *Wagner as Man and Artist* and *Richard Strauss*. They were great days for a musician to live in. Never before Richter's time had really great conducting been seen in this country. Richter was an outstanding personality: it was impossible to be indifferent to him—either one must be

enthusiastic in his support or antagonistic to him. He was a German of the most uncompromising type: he believed in the artistic supremacy of his people. The arrows of those who advocated the supremacy of British music he ignored as he would a few puny pinpricks.

Indeed, he had reason for much of his contempt. On Richter's appointment as conductor of the Birmingham Festivals in 1884, Sullivan made no secret of his displeasure. He resented any German being offered the post because in his opinion it discredited British art and artists. 'If it is true', he said to Joseph Bennett, 'that Richter has been, or is to be, offered the Birmingham Festival, I think it is an affront to all of us English.' Again he remarked: 'I should certainly have considered it an honour if they had offered me the festival, whether I could have undertaken it or not. But it is not entirely selfish, for not a thought of envy or regret should I have felt if Cowen, Stanford, Barnby, or Randegger (who is one of us to all practical purposes) had been selected. They would have done the work well'.

This was the beginning of the war. It was fought right up to 1911, when Richter left this country. No composer or writer on music could pass through that period without taking sides in the fight, and Havergal Brian was destined to be both composer and critic. It was all part of the great fight for the establishment of a modern British school of music—a worthy cause, with Elgar, Delius, Vaughan Williams, Holst and Bantock fighting for recognition, and Ethel Smyth, a Leipzig-trained woman, complaining bitterly of the unseen obstructions of 'the Machine' and 'the Faculty'. Richter was in the centre of the battle, conducting an orchestra unquestionably superior to any other in this country. He asked for no quarter and he gave none.

In the Cromwellian war there was a type of English gentleman who can best be described as the puritan cavalier. Held by his conscience to believe in the right of one party, he was yet bound by ties of loyalty to take sides with the other. In the battle of musical nationalism Havergal Brian was a puritan cavalier.

ELGAR-WORSHIP

I

AFTER Brian's two years in the timber-merchants' office, the firm went into liquidation and he obtained a post with another timber firm as outside representative in rural areas for a radius of twenty miles round the Potteries, at a salary of two pounds a week and commission on sales. The work took him into some of the most beautiful country in England, ranging from the moors of the Peak to the luxurious agricultural country of Cheshire and Shropshire. Most of his travelling had to be done on foot from the nearest railway stations, and he became familiar with the landlords of many excellent country inns where in those days a good midday meal could be had for about tenpence, including beer. He now lived at Hartshill, between Stoke and Newcastle-under-Lyme, in a residential district that was much more convenient for attending concerts than the remote district of Dresden had been. He kept up his efforts at composition, obtained a post as musical critic for the *Hallé* concerts on the newly-revived *Musical World*, and continued his post as organist at Odd Rode. Brian was a busy man, but a happy one.

He liked Odd Rode because of its seclusion: he found it restful and convenient for quiet work on Sundays between services; he liked the Cheshire countryside with its picturesque half-timbered houses, and the rugged mass of Mow Cop crowned with its fake ruin always on the horizon to remind him that the hills of Staffordshire lay only a few hours' walk to the east, and he liked his choirmaster, Arthur Bailey. He and Bailey had a common bond in their admiration for Elgar, born of their experience at the *première* of *King Olaf* in 1896. Since then, however, Elgar's work had not brought him again to the Potteries.

There had been some friction between Elgar and Swinnerton Heap as the result of the near failure of *King Olaf* at the 1896 performance. Elgar was nervous at this concert, and his grip on the orchestra unsure. Elgar blamed Heap for Lloyd's non-appearance at the final rehearsal, and Heap was hurt. It was in Heap's opinion a sign of ingratitude. Not a single member of the triennial festival committee had heard any of Elgar's music when *King Olaf* was submitted to them; they had several good works from other composers on the table, including Bantock's *Fire-worshippers*, and it was due entirely to Heap's ardent advocacy that *King Olaf* was chosen. The success of the 1896 performance

had decided Novello's to take Elgar's compositions out of the hands of Berthold Tours, who did not understand them,¹ and place them under the control of A. J. Jaeger, who fought for Elgar at home and abroad with the spirit of a crusader, and all this came as a result of Heap's initial effort. Heap talked freely of his disappointment in Elgar, Brian heard of it from Sherratt, at whose premises Heap used to carry on his private teaching in Stoke, and others had heard of it too, for when Brian tried to interest Archibald Coghill (whose munificence had made the later triennial festivals possible) in the later works of Elgar, Coghill met the suggestion with a chilly refusal.

This ill-considered slight to Heap by Elgar had its repercussion in 1900, when *The Dream of Gerontius* came up for rehearsal by the Birmingham Festival Choir, of which Heap was chorus-master. It must have shaken Elgar to realize that his work was at the mercy of one whom he had offended. In common with a great many other composers, Elgar did not hesitate to regard as an enemy anyone who did not behave exactly as he wished, and although his fears for the future of *Gerontius* were groundless on this occasion (for whatever Heap thought of Elgar's manners, he was too good a musician not to admire his music) Elgar seems to have been suspicious from the first. His suspicion was allayed in a dramatic manner, however, for hardly had the rehearsals for *Gerontius* got beyond their preliminary stages than Heap was taken ill with pneumonia and died. The Birmingham Festival Committee requested Stockley to take over the post of chorus-master for the remaining rehearsals, and in doing so made the mistake that was to cause Elgar much greater anxiety, for Stockley was getting on in years (he had had his day as chorus-master of the Birmingham Festival Choir and retired in 1897 in favour of Swinnerton Heap). Stockley was a Nonconformist, out of sympathy with Elgar's Roman Catholicism, and unable to assimilate the new style of choral technique *The Dream of Gerontius* demanded. On account of these things Stockley has been loaded with the whole responsibility for the failure of the Birmingham production. This is unfair, since the actual cause of the failure was a poor joke, starting among some irresponsible young male choristers, and spreading to the others. Richter had a high opinion of the work and did his best to get a sympathetic interpretation, but was unable to cope with Stockley's choristers. Elgar addressed the choir and orchestra at the final rehearsal, imploring them to treat his work seriously—and with some success, for they had a genuine respect for him. It was too late,

¹ Elgar's original conception of *King Olaf* joined the various scenes together with orchestral interludes. The removal of these, which gave the work its present disjointed character, was Tours' idea.

however, for many faults to be corrected, and a disappointing performance resulted.

A. J. Jaeger thought so highly of the work that he had invited several German friends to the Birmingham performance. Despite its uninspired rendering they were able to see the possibilities of *The Dream of Gerontius* and did not conceal their opinion. Grasping Jaeger's hand publicly at the conclusion of the performance Julius Buths exclaimed: 'Ein wunderbares Werk; eins der schönsten Werke die ich kenne', and Otto Lessman also proclaimed *Gerontius* a masterpiece. If they hoped to influence public opinion by their pronouncements, however, they misjudged the English, who remained unconvinced. Jaeger was surprised and rather annoyed at the coolness of the press criticisms: 'Now you Englishers have a composer at last,' he wrote, 'you might be excused if you waxed enthusiastic over him for once in a way. But, oh dear, no! If this were only a wretched new opera or a dull new oratorio by Mascagni or Perosi, the papers would have columns of gossip and gush about those two frauds. But it's only an English musician (not an actress or a jockey or a batsman) and he is treated as a mere ordinary nobody.'

Such opinions are liable to stir up resentment in 'Englishers'. For many years it had been felt that the Germans were too apt to judge all music by comparison with that of their own musicians, and that certain merits peculiar to the music of other nations were disregarded by the Germans. Hans Richter said 'There is no French music', and conducted Debussy with his fists. Of the composers mentioned by Jaeger, Mascagni was regarded in England as 'advanced' but in the true line of Italian operatic development. Perosi was a priest-composer greatly advertised by whatever propaganda the Roman Catholic Church could employ, but his compositions met with hardly any support from the British public; it was simply not true that his oratorios were acceptable to us, whatever gossip and gush might find its way into the papers. All over the country, too, were British musicians like Dr. Henry Hiles of Manchester who believed that a school of music based on British musical traditions was the only satisfactory one for this country; that our decline as a musical nation was due to our striving after foreign models. 'The German school', he wrote, 'is methodical and calculating. German influence kills British music.'

Secure behind a proud bulwark of classical and romantic music of the highest order, Germans could bombard the feeble army of British musicians with impunity, for they were not even entrenched, as the Russian nationalists had been, in the native soil of their folk-song. A considerable number of our best musicians were German-trained and in sympathy with German styles of

composition, and there was a preponderance of opinion among concert audiences that German music and German artists were incomparable.

But it was not true that English audiences had neglected Elgar. His compositions had been enthusiastically received by his fellow-townsmen in Worcester, had spread thence to the cathedral cities so closely associated with Worcester in the Three Choirs Festival, and through Swinnerton Heap to Birmingham, Wolverhampton and North Staffordshire; Leeds had produced *Caractacus* and London the *Enigma Variations*. In all these centres Elgar was admired, but his oratorio had yet to be introduced to the London public, and what the London critics had heard of *The Dream of Gerontius* in Birmingham did not make a favourable impression. The Germans made the mistake of confusing English opinion with London opinion. It was a very natural mistake for foreigners to make, but it was nevertheless galling to those who had the cause of British music at heart, and for the first time in centuries they began to rally against what had for long been an overpowering foe.

There was no unity of action between London and the provincial centres, however, and but for Havergal Brian the Staffordshire Potteries would not have played the part they did in the spread of British choral music during the Edwardian period. The story is simple, and typical of the way so many great things are done among those extraordinary people who live in our lesser-known towns.

II

With the death of Dr. Swinnerton Heap the North Staffordshire Triennial Festivals ceased. Not only was the lack of his organizing genius felt, but the financial position was insecure; although North Staffordshire had earned a musical reputation by introducing *King Olaf* and Coleridge-Taylor's *Death of Minnehaha* to the world, the triennial festivals had in their later years been run at financial loss, and critics of their value were not lacking as soon as their pockets were in danger of being lightened.

Interest in local musical circles turned suddenly in a new direction. A famous Hanley conductor, James Garner, entered a choir for the principal event of the Welsh National Eisteddfod in 1900, and carried off the prize. This drew greater publicity for the district than the triennial festivals had drawn, and involved no financial loss—indeed it was rewarded with a prize of two hundred guineas. Only in one quarter did Garner fail to be applauded, and that was in the mining villages where James Whewall conducted his Talke and District Prize Choir. This choir, too, had won first

prize at the same Welsh gathering, but as they had entered in a class for smaller choirs their glory had been eclipsed by Garner's more spectacular success. Whewall therefore enlarged his choir, calling it the North Staffordshire District Choral Society, entered it in the principal event of the 1901 Eisteddfod, and he, too, won the first prize. Next year both choirs entered against each other, and Whewall proved the victor.

Arthur Bailey was honorary financial secretary of the triumphant choir.

In the excitement of this rivalry the passing of the triennial festivals was felt less acutely than it might otherwise have been. Nobody had much love for an effort that brought financial loss, and Coghill, who appeased the guarantors by defraying the losses himself, had got more kicks than thanks. An interested onlooker at these events had been Havergal Brian. He had bought the vocal score of *The Dream of Gerontius* when it was first published, and his admiration for Elgar increased proportionately as he saw its superiority over Elgar's earlier work in *King Olaf*.

Fired with enthusiasm for *The Dream of Gerontius*, he was maddened by the neglect to which it was apparently being subjected in this country. He imagined that merit was the one guiding factor in newspaper criticism; it was the only one he accepted in his own reports to the *Musical World*, and in this he had been helped in every way by the editor, who provided him with the score of every new work he went to hear at the Hallé concerts. The press campaign in favour of Perosi should have taught him that not all papers had the same disinterested outlook as the *Musical World*, but Brian was young and had much to learn. All the reports of *Gerontius* came from Germany, where Julius Butts had followed up his conviction on the merits of *Gerontius* by obtaining a first-rate performance at the Lower Rhine Festival, and the German press became favourable towards a British composer for the first time since Schumann had pleaded the cause of Sterndale Bennett. Only in the provinces, however, did *Gerontius* continue to be performed in England. There were performances of *The Dream of Gerontius* in Sheffield and Worcester during 1901, but they made little impression on the London critics, and the composer was deeply hurt by what he regarded as a secret conspiracy among them to boycott his work.

This suspicion of Elgar's appears at times to be almost an obsession. From the years immediately following his marriage, when he and his wife set up house in London, the suspicion had been hardening into conviction. Writing to Miss Dora Penny ('Dorabella' of the *Enigma Variations*) in 1899, he said: 'It is indiscreet of your co-variant (ahem!) W.M.B. to say you are all to be played by Richter. He, R., is to see 'em in Vienna very

soon and—if he is not prevented by certain London — (mystery!), will play you in the Spring (tra! la!).’ London can be a painful place to the ambitious provincial, and Elgar was only one of many composers to feel the weight of metropolitan disapproval. Looking for any reason other than the inferior quality of his early salon pieces to account for his failure, Elgar would not have far to go for the evidence he sought, for Joseph Bennett, in *Forty Years of Music* (1908) tells of several unpleasant experiences that help to illustrate the pettiness of both London and provincial hangers-on at musical festivals known to Elgar.

‘Fifty years ago, and for a good while later, journalists who attended festivals in the provinces, and received free tickets, were not looked upon as gentlemen, albeit, when referred to as a body, they were sometimes styled “gentlemen of the press”, that form being employed as a sort of compliment if toasts were about. They may have been famous critics in London, but, generally speaking, the provincial mind recognized no difference between them and the newspaper men whose ordinary vocation it was to attend coroners’ inquests, and make notes of police court proceedings. This was not all. Your festival official, in the long-past time to which I refer, appreciated in a wonderful manner his four days’ brief authority, and exerted himself to the extent of unblushing impudence; without deliberate purpose, in many cases, I firmly believe, but simply because he thought it the proper course to take with a journalist. I remember how, on one occasion, I walked to a certain cathedral, rather carefully “made up” for the part of a gentleman, and was received by a local magnate, acting as steward, with pleasant smiles and a friendly mien. I showed him my ticket, which was prominently marked “Press”, and, alas! the smiles vanished, and the bearing became stiff and hard, as, waving his hand, he cried, “Pass up”. I did not blame the poor man, because there was the question whether he knew any better, and likewise there was the fact, avowed on the ticket, that I had entered as a mere dead-head.

‘From dignified stewards to the young gentlemen who inspect tickets at the doors, is, no doubt, a descent, but it brings little change of atmosphere. When I first knew the Birmingham Festival, these officials made themselves specially obnoxious to the critics, and, more than once, I turned upon them sharply in the columns of the paper I represented, but not with much result.

‘There is something to be said on the other side, but the race of music critics has vastly improved within the last fifty years. Here let me tell of an occurrence that would hardly be possible now. On the occasion of a concert in the old monastic refectory at Worcester, a well-known critic, who had arrived late, lingered in the vestibule instead of passing on. He talked as he lingered, and presently one of the cathedral clergy, an old friend of mine and a most amiable man, gently offered to show the dawdler to his seat. Instead of thanks came a torrent of reproaches. The critic would not be dictated to by canons, or deans, or bishops, or by all of them put together. He would go to his seat when he pleased, and just then preferred to stay where he was.

Meanwhile, what was this Festival? Did the canon know that the London journalists kept it alive by making it a national instead of a local institution? and especially did he know that if the London men were to ignore it all Worcestershire could not save the Festival from extinction? Before this hail of words the canon wisely beat a retreat, and the storm soon blew over. But it was not pleasant while it lasted.'

These experiences of Bennett's would probably take place in the 'sixties or 'seventies of the last century, but there may not have been much improvement in the early 'nineties, when Elgar's career as a serious composer began with the *Froissart* overture and *The Black Knight* at his native Three Choirs Festival. It is difficult otherwise to understand why the English critics failed to appreciate the merits of *The Dream of Gerontius* at the Birmingham Festival of 1900 when German visitors like Dr. Otto Lessman and Professor Julius Buths were wildly enthusiastic despite the obvious failings of the choir. Prejudices may have every appearance of being dead, but a conflict of opinions or of interests will often revive them. The conflict of opinions over the merits of *The Dream of Gerontius* was influenced by four separate external forces, which had nothing to do with the artistic value of the work. Firstly, Stockley's religious and musical dislike of the work; secondly, Jaegar's contempt for British critics, which had the support of his German friends; thirdly, that section of the British press that hoped to see a British school of music develop was infuriated by foreign interference in what they thought ought to be an internal problem; and fourthly the provincials paid little attention to London opinions. A politician seeing such a situation could have gained his own ends easily, but musicians are notoriously bad diplomats, and Elgar could see in it all only one thing—that while *Gerontius* was being performed both in Germany and England with equal success, only in Germany were recognized musical authorities supporting his cause.

Elgar could not recognize in this artistic fight a reflection of the political fight that was about to commence. All to him was confusion. Nor was the conflict of ideas capable of any honourable compromise; it grew in intensity as the British school of composition made headway, and burst out with some of the most illogical blustering ever printed in responsible newspapers when continued political friction produced the conflagration of 1914.

III

Meanwhile Havergal Brian ached with a desire to hear *The Dream of Gerontius* adequately performed in the Potteries. It was a bold idea, only capable of fruition by a process equivalent to the wholesale conversion of a band of people whose minds were

set on a very different object. Intimately known to him was a choir that had proved itself unbeatable in the competition arena. Twice the North Staffordshire District Choral Society had won the main prize of the Welsh National Eisteddfod, and that was a record never before attained by any choir. They had the superb technique that would, under suitable direction, give a worthy performance of *The Dream of Gerontius*; the difficulty was that they had no ambition to do so: having been founded for the sole purpose of winning the Welsh two hundred guineas prize, they were not easily persuaded to give up the effort when success in every case was almost a foregone conclusion.

Elgar was not unknown to some of them, who, like Arthur Bailey, had sung *King Olaf* in the North Staffordshire festival choir of 1896. The approach was through Bailey. Havergal Brian talked about *Gerontius* until Bailey tingled with curiosity to hear it. Brian played the Prelude as an opening voluntary at morning service one Sunday at Odd Rode Church, and Bailey was convinced. The afternoon was spent at Bailey's house, playing through the remainder of *Gerontius* on the pianoforte, and Bailey went forth a missionary. Harnessing his horses the very next morning he set off to call a special meeting of the North Staffordshire District Choral Society's committee. He saw the conductor at his home and committee men behind their counters or coming home from the pits, and a fortnight later a deputation visited Elgar at his Malvern home. They offered him the services of a choir believed to be superior to any other in the country, the engagement of whatever soloists and orchestral players he should choose, and the opportunity of conducting the performance himself. Never, one feels, has a British composer received so completely satisfactory an offer.

Years afterwards Elgar described to Havergal Brian the arrival of this deputation and their lunching with him. How they talked afterwards of their plans—all except one man, who sat silently in a corner of the room. At last Elgar said: 'Might I ask who is the gentleman to be responsible for all this?' With a wave of his hand Arthur Bailey indicated the silent one in the corner. That was Elgar's introduction to the man who in his own sphere was to do what even Richter had failed to do—train an English choir to give a worthy rendering of *The Dream of Gerontius*. His name was James Whewall.

It had taken more effort on Bailey's part to persuade Whewall to embark on this venture than Elgar ever knew. Whewall was not interested in concerts—he was interested in competitions. Twice the choir had succeeded in winning the Welsh National blue riband, and it was known that the Welsh were taking their defeats seriously, that a conference had been called, and that the

next festival would see two of their finest choirs—Merthyr and Dowlais—combined to do battle against Whewall's singers. It was a situation after Whewall's heart, for the tougher the opposition the better he liked the fight—it was years since he had failed to win any prize he sought. How, then, did Bailey talk him into giving a performance of *Gerontius*?

Whewall wanted only to excel. Twice already he had beaten the Welsh, and had no doubt that he could do so again, but according to the press *Gerontius* had beaten everyone in this country; by conquering *Gerontius* he would gain more credit than by repeating his victories over opponents already proved inferior.

Elgar made only one mistake. Carried away by the completely satisfying nature of the choir committee's offer, he had chosen his soloists but had not insisted on any particular orchestra.

Whewall was a product of the tonic sol-fa movement, with little understanding of an orchestra and less of its importance. His only previous concert in Hanley had been a performance of Haydn's *Creation*, when he calmly laid down his baton as the chorus finished singing, and let the orchestra finish by themselves in the midst of almost deafening applause. His committee entered into an arrangement with the Hallé Orchestra for forty-five players at a fixed price, for a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius*, and engaged a further twenty-six local players on the understanding that they practised their parts at home. There was to be no rehearsal until the day of the concert.

The orchestral arrangements were in the hands of Sherratt, the society's organist, whose principal difficulty was to know which instruments to eliminate in order to get the best out of the forty-five Hallé players. Brian was opposed to the arrangements that had been made, and urged the need for a completely professional orchestra, but he had no authority in a choral society of which he was not even a member, and Sherratt was determined to carry out the arrangements for a scratch orchestra and no rehearsals, well knowing, however, that such a procedure had proved dangerous in the past.

While Sherratt was going about this business the Hallé Orchestra visited Hanley and gave an inspiring performance of Brahms' 3rd Symphony. Brian and Sherratt went together to this concert, and afterwards adjourned with some of the players to the Grand Hotel for drinks and a chat. Richter was there, sitting at a table, drinking beer and whisky alternately. After a short time the players left to catch their train to Manchester, but Richter was staying the night at the hotel, so remained at his table, his beer and his whisky still before him. Sherratt and Brian introduced themselves as people interested in the forthcoming performances of *The Dream of Gerontius*.

For a moment it seemed that Richter would explode, but the word 'Gerontius' just reached his ears in time. He invited them to sit and drink beer and whisky while he listened to their plans for the forthcoming event. He even showed a certain interest in Brian's ambitions as a composer and promised to look at the score of his *Tragic Prelude* and a new overture he had written entitled *For Valour*. The conversation then settled down to details of *The Dream of Gerontius*, until Sherratt began to lose track of the argument. Brian and Richter were edging into comparisons of Elgar's orchestration with that of Wagner and Strauss, which did not suit Sherratt, who wanted practical advice on his orchestral problems.

Richter paused to tip another glass of beer.

'Do you think', asked Sherratt, 'we ought to use the tam-tam?'

Richter went on with his tipping.

'Do you think . . .?' repeated Sherratt.

Brian kicked him under the table.

'Do you think', persisted Sherratt, 'we ought to use the tam-tam?'

Richter set down his glass. His affability had gone. Solemnly he said, nodding his great head, 'Py all means use der tam-tam.'

The conversation was at an end, and when in due course Brian called on Richter in Manchester with the scores of *Tragic Prelude* and *For Valour*, he found him a very different person from the man he had met in the Grand Hotel.

The tam-tam is rarely struck in *Gerontius*, but the effect Elgar produces by its use is at times terrifying.

Havergal Brian sat behind the percussion as Elgar took the final rehearsal in the Victoria Hall, Hanley, near the organ bench occupied by his friend Sherratt. Elgar was an inspiring figure in those days; alert, abounding in energy and enthusiasm, a fiery-hearted leader of those who had at stake the same cause as himself. He was visibly impressed by the tone of the choir, and their quick, intelligent response to his demands—this latter quality was the distinctive feature of Whewall's training; other choirs had tone and balance, but Whewall's choir had an uncanny ability to seize upon the intricacies of the composer's interpretation immediately—'You must be angels', said Elgar, 'for you sing like angels.' He seemed carried away by the singing of the choir, his eyes flashed brilliantly as of one inspired, and occasionally there would come into them a flush of tears. He was kind to the orchestra.

Sherratt had lent Brian Elgar's full score for some weeks before the performance, so Brian knew *Gerontius* thoroughly. There were no mishaps like that which had almost brought *King Olaf* to grief. 'The infinitesimal trifles, not shortcomings, which did occur, were caused merely by a want of more time in rehearsing with the

orchestra,' wrote Elgar after the event, 'I place the chorus in the highest rank, and I thank the members for giving me an opportunity of hearing a performance of my work almost flawless.'

THE BATTLE OPENS

THE trifling flaws that occurred in the Hanley performance were mostly due to Sherratt's shortsighted policy for the orchestra, but they were not sufficient to discourage Elgar, whose admiration for the North Staffordshire District Choral Society was so sincere that shortly afterwards he chose them to be asked to assist in the first London performance which was to take place in the newly-built Roman Catholic Cathedral at Westminster.

With a suddenness characteristic of a decisive body, the propaganda in favour of Perosi ceased, and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* took its place. There is no religious community more closely in touch with the will of the people than the Roman Catholic, however aloof it may appear to the stranger. The public would not have Perosi, but had crowded the concert halls of Worcester, Sheffield and Hanley, to listen to a musical setting of Cardinal Newman's poem. The time had come for its successful production in London, and only the press seemed not to know it. Apart from the doctrinal sympathy with which the Roman Catholic Church regarded *The Dream of Gerontius*, there was the opportunity of gaining public approval by presenting a popular work in London.

The North Staffordshire District Choral Society was honoured by Elgar's trust in their ability to sing his work in London, and fell in heartily with his proposal. Its members not only agreed to sing, but also paid their own fares to London. Elgar's personality appealed to them as much as did his music. Brimful of energy and enthusiasm, his rapid speech and alert mind had a lot in common with the quick receptive mentality that the choir as a whole had made their distinguishing feature, and he trusted them. Elgar, at this period of his career, had a warm heart towards those in sympathy with his music, and a manner that won the friendship of these people.

The part of the angel was again sung by Miss Muriel Foster, who had sung it in Hanley, and had also been largely responsible for the perfection of Butts' performance at the Lower Rhine Festival.¹ This latter was not the first performance in Germany, for Butts had had a performance in Düsseldorf in 1901. The Düsseldorf performance, however, had left much to be desired, but differed from the Birmingham performance in that the choral section was reliable and the soloists and orchestra not so effective. Jaeger wrote a full account to Miss Dora Penny from Düsseldorf:

¹ March 1902

'On Wednesday morning we went to the first orchestral rehearsal with soloists. The orchestra of 80 odd was not like Wood's 110 for reading powers or tone, but they answered every purpose and Elgar had not much to find fault with. Butts, though a man of complete *savoir faire*, is not a great "interpreter"—I mean *co-creator*, and there were many passages of which more might have been made as regards mystery, feeling, expression, force, etc., etc. . . . But directly Wüllner opened his mouth to sing "Jesus, Maria, meine Stunde kam" we said that man has *Brains*. And by the Olympian Jove, he *had* Brains galore. He made us sit up and realize that Elgar's intention, and what I had expected when I wrote my much-maligned analysis, *could* be realized by an artist. I never heard such intellectual deeply-felt singing. Not that W's voice is wonderful. No! But his Brains and his heart are; and they are more than mere voice in a work of such greatness as this wonderful *Gerontius*.'

At this performance Wüllner did not seem in good voice and made a serious blunder in the first portion of the work, but in Part II:

'Wüllner was *great*, especially in the "Take me away". The big chorus "Praise to the Holiest", which astonished the German musicians by its monumental architecture, was a masterly performance, and the Finale, that wonderful Finale, was another revelation to those who heard it only at B'ham. Unfortunately the Angel was anything but angelically perfect. But though Elgar suffered sundry twitches and pangs when the Angel threatened to "fall", the audience could not have realized, thanks to Butts' alertness, how dangerously near collapse the performance came once or twice through this d—— Angel's shortcomings. (By the way, what the *Musical Times* says about her, I did not telegraph).'

During the performance, after she had missed an important entry, Butts told the Angel that 'es war scheusslich'. The poor creature confided this to Jaeger during supper. When, therefore, the second performance in Düsseldorf took place next year at the Lower Rhine Festival, a British contralto sang the Angel's part, and sang it admirably; from that time onwards Muriel Foster made the part her own, and with Wüllner and Ffrangçon Davies was entrusted to sing the solos at the London performance. *The Times* report of this performance is so important that it must be given in full:

'When the history of modern British music comes to be written there will be few more curious chapters than that which deals with Dr. Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*. When it was produced at the Birmingham Festival of 1900 its many beauties were freely recognized. It was felt that a great opportunity had been missed of obtaining a fine climax in the hymn "Praise to the Holiest", the theme of which was not worthy of the words, but this, the main defect of the work, seemed not so important as to stand in the way of its success. Yet there was no reason

to doubt whether the oratorio would not meet the fate of many better works, and be put straightway on the shelf. To this doom it seemed, indeed, for some time to have been consigned, for no performance was given in London, and none of the other festivals followed Birmingham, until it was given at the Lower Rhenish Festival at Düsseldorf in May 1902. The important thing in its history was not so much the performance in Germany, but the lavish praise that was bestowed on it by Herr Richard Strauss, who, no doubt, speaking with an authority based on an exhaustive knowledge of the whole of British music, declared it to be the most original composition that had proceeded from England. It may have been the case that it was under consideration for the Worcester and Sheffield festivals of last year, before this remarkable tribute was paid to it by the German composer; but, whether that were so or not, the public flocked to hear it at both these performances, and it is now a prime favourite, since many who would not venture to express a favourable opinion of anything English on their own account have the satisfaction of feeling that they have the right to admire what has been so warmly praised in Germany. The best, because the most practical, tribute to its popularity is in the fact that a number of persons were found willing to pay the sum of five guineas for the privilege of hearing it in conditions that could not be altogether favourable. The acoustic properties of the new Cathedral at Westminster are at present very far from perfect, and in few respects could the interpretation compare with that given at Sheffield last autumn. Still, Londoners have now heard the work; and as two more performances in different surroundings are spoken of, it will not be allowed to share the oblivion which is the lot of so much of the best English music.

The composer conducted an orchestra among which were many well-known players; the North Staffordshire District Choral Society, consisting of some 200 voices, sang the choruses, and the semi-chorus was made up of 24 singers. Miss Muriel Foster and Mr. Ffrangçon Davies sang the soprano and baritone music, and both were completely successful, entering into their parts with full earnestness and religious intensity. Nothing finer has been heard of late years than Miss Foster's delivery of the words of the angel; and Mr. Ffrangçon Davies' voice, in the opening of the splendid "*Proficiscere, anima Christiana*", rang out with magnificent effect that was all the stronger from the contrast with what had just preceded it. Dr. Ludwig Wüllner's singing of the part of Gerontius was highly praised last year at Düsseldorf, when the work was of course given in a German translation. It would be hypercritical, perhaps, to dwell upon the many imperfections of his English pronunciation, or to emphasize that in a work of deep and solemn expressiveness such a jar as was felt at the words "Take me away" (when only one vowel was pronounced as it would be by an Englishman) is most disturbing to the thoughtful hearer. We have always felt that the engagement of foreign artists to do things which English performers cannot do as well is amply justified; but in oratorio the English have upheld a splendid tradition and are easily the superiors of foreign singers. Dr. Wüllner's admirers willingly admit the marked defects of his voice and method; but they maintain that these count for nothing

in comparison with the intellectuality of his interpretations and the intense realization which he conveys to his hearers. For the sake of his voice, the long solo in the first part was transposed a note lower—but the merits which were to compensate us for this were hardly perceptible. The whole, from beginning to end, was sung without alteration of tone-quality, nor was anything particular expressed excepting only the weakness of the dying man. In the fine litany the tenor solo should surely be audible through the chorus; it was not; and there was no suggestion of any contrast between the man in his bodily agony and the disembodied spirit in its new surroundings.

‘On the merits of the performance in general we are not able to speak, as the effect of choir and orchestra was entirely lost in the seats allotted to the press. We learn from those more fortunately placed that the average standard was good, and that the semi-choir was very efficient, although the chorus of demons was not so spirited as could be wished.’

One thing stands out from *The Times* report for all to see—it is unflinchingly anti-German. In the battle for the establishment of British music no quarter could be given to the enemy—and Elgar, our most outstanding composer, was in favour with the Germans. The rest of the report is sound criticism, and even the acknowledgment of common neglect of British works contained in the sentence: ‘Yet there was no reason to doubt whether the oratorio would not meet the fate of many better works, and be put straightway on the shelf’, can be defended by reference to the common belief of the time. Society was ruled by certain inflexible laws: the law of supply and demand; the law of the moral code. Men yearn to be free, and iconoclasts will inevitably rise—were constantly rising, in fact—who rebel against these laws. Many of these men were sincere, and their contributions to art valuable, but in so far as they opposed established laws they would fail. William Morris’s socialism and Oscar Wilde’s homosexuality were awful examples within the recent knowledge of people in those days. It was unfortunate that musical works were habitually given a first performance and put on the shelf, but it was true. Why pretend otherwise, or expect the musical public’s behaviour to change? Elgar had been lucky in the case of *Gerontius*, for it had had several successful performances and looked like having many more: other works superior in merit were said to be still on the shelf, and resentment of such a situation was natural among their composers, but it could not be helped.

To-day we know that some of the forces regarded as inflexible in 1903 were not necessarily so. We are experimenting in economic control, and hope thereby to overcome the unequal balancing of supply and demand that has obtained in the past. Psychological research has been carried out with the object of creating a demand for unnecessary articles, and it is unthinkable that no method can be evolved by which musical works of recognized merit can be

sure of enough performances to establish them in public esteem. The fact is that art may be æsthetically progressive but reactionary in practical affairs, and we are not yet in a position to condemn the prejudices of our fathers.

But it is no comfort for a composer to be told that his work will probably have one performance and no more. Elgar had less cause for complaint than most, but he nevertheless resented the suggestion that he was lucky, especially when the Germans held the view that his work was being neglected. He sided with those who seemed most likely to help him to make his work known, and Elgar was not alone in such behaviour.

ENCOURAGEMENT

H AVERGAL BRIAN'S admiration for Elgar increased after the Hanley performance of *The Dream of Gerontius*, and he felt some justifiable pride in the knowledge that he had been responsible for the revival of interest in Elgar's music among Bailey's friends. He knew that the very real friendship felt by the Potteries' singers towards Elgar was reciprocated, and that he, Brian, had a friend in Elgar who would be sympathetic towards his efforts at composition. The encouraging letter he had received six years before, when he had sent that youthful anthem for Elgar's criticism, strengthened this belief.

He continued to write music, and made friends with G. J. Halford, attending his orchestral concerts in Birmingham whenever opportunity and funds allowed, and Halford went so far as to forward one of Brian's orchestral scores to Dan Godfrey in Bournemouth. Godfrey was sufficiently impressed to offer to perform the work if Brian would send him the orchestral parts. The dull work of copying out parts, however, was so repulsive to Brian that they were never completed, and he let slip the chance of Godfrey's performance. No doubt he blamed himself for his weakness, but he had never been disciplined to an acceptance of the necessity of monotony—as a free-lance he had always been his own master in artistic pursuits, and even in his daily employment he was left much to his own devices, arranging his visits to the firm's customers to suit his own convenience, and giving satisfaction so long as the normal flood of orders was kept up.

He had always been able to overcome an irksome task by the exercise of a little ingenuity, and the failure to take advantage of Godfrey's offer forced him to consider ways and means by which his music could be copied without recourse to too much penmanship. He inquired of John Cope, a young man of about his own age who conducted an orchestra in Burslem, and who had studied the organ under Rheinburger in Munich. Cope had in his orchestra two brothers named Barnett, sons of a master printer in Burslem, and their advice was that music could be printed cheaply by lithography if Brian would copy out his parts on a special paper and with a special ink they would provide. This fair copy they would transfer to a stone and print therefrom as many copies as Brian required.

By so simple a procedure Brian's copying difficulties could be overcome. The opportunity of the Bournemouth performance, however, had passed, so Brian turned his attention to a part-song in which Cope was interested. Brian's love of Shakespeare, born

of his youthful experiences in the gallery of the Longton theatre when the great Edmund Tearle trod its boards, had welled up in a setting of *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?* Cope's choir performed the work in Burslem Town Hall, using the lithographed copies the Barnetts had printed, and their performance was well received. G. J. Halford's choir also gave a performance in Stourbridge, and Brian sent one of the lithographed copies to Elgar for criticism. Elgar was by this time the most generally respected composer in England, and compositions from unknown men were constantly sent to him for criticism; it was a boring task, however, reading or playing through so many works, few of which had any artistic merit, and Elgar would gladly have avoided the job altogether but for his wife's wishes. On Lady Elgar fell the secretarial part of the work, anyway, so her desire that her husband should do what he could to encourage young composers might hardly be refused. In her reply to Brian she stated that Elgar rarely played twice through any work submitted to him, but that Brian's setting of *Shall I compare thee to a Summer's Day*, had interested him so much that he had done so on this occasion, that he thought highly of the work, and would be prepared to recommend it to the Morecambe Competitive Festival Committee should Brian so wish.

On this recommendation the committee accepted Brian's part-song, making it their principal choral test-piece, and Breitkopf and Härtel undertook to print and publish the work. Under the terms of the contract Brian was to receive five hundred copies for his own use and apparently nothing in cash. It was a peculiar business arrangement, but Brian had at any rate made his bow as a composer, and the knowledge that his beloved Elgar thought well of his music was an encouragement greater perhaps than any other could possibly have been.

Elgar's appreciation did not stop with a single good deed. He followed up his initial interest in Brian's work by inviting him to the Three Choirs' Festival at Worcester in 1905. Thirty-seven years later, with Britain and Germany in the throes of a second world war, Brian looked back on the event as one of the greatest in his life; how Elgar invited him, an almost unknown parish organist, to go as his guest to Worcester, 'where he introduced me to all his friends—found me rooms, and when I reached them I found tickets for all performances, including an invitation to lunch and the banquet when he was made Freeman of the City of Worcester. Deterioration is inevitable—we all travel towards it, for youth is not perpetual, though the mind is. I've never forgotten the perfume of wine and flowers in the Worcester City Guildhall. Well-a-day—the war cannot blot out such experiences—rather do they sustain me in these mean war years.'

EARLY VOCAL WORKS

I

WITHOUT doubt Elgar made a mistake in engaging Wüllner for the first London performance of *Gerontius* when John Coates was available. Coates had proved himself at the Worcester performance of *Gerontius* in 1902, but nobody went into ecstasies over his brain. In any case, Coates was the perfect interpreter of *Gerontius*.

He had much in common with Brian. The son of a Yorkshire church choirmaster, John Coates had sung in church choirs from the age of five, left school at the age of thirteen to work in an office, and sung his first operatic part—Valentine in *Faust*—while still employed in that office. It goes almost without saying that the opera company for whom he sang was the Carl Rosa. For some years he toured Britain and America as a light baritone in various musical comedies, but his artistic ideals led him ultimately to renounce this work and seek a reputation for music of a worthier type. He was convinced, too, that his voice was not baritone by nature, but tenor. He therefore gave up public singing and practised in private as a tenor until he was satisfied with the result. Those were hard times, for he had no income other than what he had earned as a baritone. He appeared as a tenor in Stanford's *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1901, singing the part of Claudio successfully, but it was not music which demanded anything exceptional from the singer, as *Gerontius* did. The Worcester performance of the latter gave him his great opportunity, and he took it. Elgar's preference for the German singer was an error that counted eventually in Coates's favour, and throughout his lifetime he continued to sing the name-part of *Gerontius* with distinction. Admirers of Elgar thought well of Coates from the first, and in this way Brian and he came to know each other.

The introduction was made through Canon Gorton, who had been so impressed with Elgar's recommendation of the part-song *Shall I compare thee to a Summer's Day?* to the Morecambe Festival Committee that he asked Brian to send him some of his other compositions. Of these he sent a tenor song to John Coates, who liked it and sang it at his recitals. The song was a setting of W. B. Yeats's *Faery Song*.

Of all Brian's songs it is one of the most delightful—the rhythm is flexible, the melody clothes and glorifies the poem, and the pianoforte accompaniment is interesting in itself, and provides the right background. Brian's modulations are original and

exquisitely suitable to the context of the piece, foreshadowing the facility of key-contrast that was to come in his later works. Technically the song is grateful to the voice, and the pianoforte writing lies well under the hands.

It is one of the few songs for which Brian felt a pianoforte accompaniment to be fitting. Most of his songs were conceived with accompaniment for the orchestra, even though they may be published in two-stave score to be played on the pianoforte. One of the first critics to appreciate Brian's songs was the Manchester journalist, Gerald Cumberland, who was associated with Brian during this period both as fellow journalist and lyric writer. For this reason his remarks may be quoted as a typical contemporary opinion:

'But though Brian's orchestral work is very fine, my own preference is for his songs. Here I think is real depth, real nobility. The melody is full of beautiful sweeping curves, it has a dramatic quality and an ineluctable beauty of phrase. The accompaniments, intricate and sometimes heavy, seem as if designed for orchestra; and herein lies the only fault of his work in this *métier*. . . . I shall never forget one morning receiving a song from him that had been composed the previous day. The text was my own work, and it was difficult to believe that my halting words had been the means of stirring the composer to so much unusual beauty. For four days in succession a new song came by the morning post—long works, finely wrought, intricate in design and full to the brim of spontaneous emotion. For that is how Brian works; when the mood is upon him, music comes from his pen in a constant stream.'

Cumberland's lyrical efforts, however, were not always as successful as Brian could have hoped, but he had the journalist's ability to produce what was wanted on request, and Brian had on occasions to make use of his skill in this work.

One such occasion was on the publication of Brian's *Soliloquy upon a Dead Child*, the original lyric of which was by Richard le Gallienne, said to be translated from a poem by the Persian poet, Háfiz, who lost his favourite boy at the age of ten, and each spring, on the boy's birthday, visited his grave to pray. Brian came upon a review of the poem in the *Manchester Guardian*, which he was reading one morning in a tramcar travelling between Burslem and Hanley. The electric trams that once served the Potteries towns had to be seen and heard to be believed: they ran on single tracks with long waits for each other at specified passing points; they were ill-sprung, cold, and terrifically noisy; hardly a place to read poetry. Yet Brian was so impressed by the beauty of the poem that he continued to read it through and through, stayed on the tramcar until it reached Stoke, forgot all his day's business and went home to set the poem to music. As

soon as it was completed he sent it off to John Coates, who sang it first in his recitals at the Bechstein Hall, London, in 1906. The accompaniment was more intricate than that of Yeats's *Faery Song*, and Coates had some difficulty in finding an accompanist to do justice to the work, but eventually he found one in Hermann Grunebaum. With typical German thoroughness Grunebaum liked to master a difficult work if it was artistically worth while.

The song was sung for several years in public without the poet's being aware that his verses were being used. Not until the chance of publication came along did it occur to Brian that the poem would be copyright. Efforts had to be made to obtain Le Gallienne's permission for their use, but it was difficult to trace his whereabouts. Eventually Arnold Bennett found the poet through his literary agents—Le Gallienne was in a New York hospital—but by that time Brian had become impatient and asked Gerald Cumberland to 'devil' a lyric for the song. Cumberland's lines were therefore used in the published version of *Soliloquy upon a Dead Child*:

*Frail young blossom my baby bloom
The world has waked to Spring once more,
And you from out your little grave
May also come through Spring's wide door,
Baby Bloom.*

Between Le Gallienne's lines and Cumberland's lies all the difference between true poetry and mere versification, and Brian would have been well advised to forgo publication rather than submit his work to the judgement of posterity with words unworthy of the music. It is possible that he underestimated the opinion of the public, as so many artists of that time did, but that cannot be a complete explanation. There is a feeling of ecstasy on the completion of a work of art, which dulls the creator's critical faculty for a time. Later comes the critical reaction when the work is often in danger of being destroyed by its creator. It needs self-discipline to wait through these periods until a more balanced judgement can be formed; that is the moment for revision—the greatest artists owe much of their strength to an understanding of themselves in this way.

Mental discipline is an acquired trait, coming as a result of proper education. Brian had had a rough-and-ready school life, and learned less under professional guidance than he did from his own private reading; consequently he set less store by academic standards than most people, and the weakness showed itself in his work—in his neglect of the finer balance of musical form, and in a tendency to rush into print without sufficient consideration of any difficulties that the performer and listener might have to overcome.

II

It is not possible to justify Brian's action, but it is possible to explain it.

Once a composition was set down on paper his interest in it flagged. It came to him as a complete whole: he rarely carried out any revision of his early works and never revised his later ones. Other composers had behaved similarly—it is the spontaneity of many of Schubert's songs that constitutes their chief charm—but Brian had not the same effusive fount of choice melody that characterized Schubert. Brian's genius was akin to that of Berlioz, for he heard his music in his mind as a flow of orchestral tone-colour, coming forth with more emphasis on orchestral effect than on balance of form. Berlioz getting out of bed in the night to dash down on paper the *Hungarian March* as he heard it sound in his mind is characteristic of the type to which Brian belonged, but Berlioz's exaggerated accounts of his genius are less to be relied on for evidence than the more careful utterances of composers like Mozart and Stanford, both of whom have left records of how music came to them. Mozart's is the most complete statement:¹

'When I am feeling well and in good humour, perhaps when I have travelled by carriage, or taking a walk after a good dinner, or at night when I cannot sleep, my thoughts come in swarms and with marvellous ease. Whence and how do they come? I do not know; I have no share in it. Those that please me I hold in my mind and hum them, at least so others have told me. Once I catch my air, another soon comes to join the first, according to the requirements of the whole composition, counterpoint, the play of the various instruments, etc., and all these morsels combine to form the whole. Then my mind kindles, if nothing comes to interrupt me. The work grows; I keep hearing it, and bring it out more and more clearly, and the composition ends by being completely executed in my mind, however long it may be. I then comprehend the whole at one glance, as I should a beautiful picture or a handsome boy; and my imagination makes me hear it not in its parts successively, as I shall come to hear it later, but as a whole in its ensemble. What a delight it is for me! It all, the inspiration and the execution, takes place in me as though it were a beautiful and very distinct dream. What I got in this way I do not forget any more easily, and this is perhaps the most precious gift our Lord has given me. If I then sit down to write I have only to draw from this store in my mind what has already accumulated there in the way I have described. Moreover, the whole is not difficult to fix on paper. The whole is perfectly determined, and rarely does my score differ much from what I have had already in mind.'

Stanford's experience illustrates another aspect of the mental process of composition—the faculty of subconscious memory.

¹ The authenticity of this letter has been questioned.

'When he was fourteen years old he tried to set a somewhat long dramatic poem as a song. He wrote the first three verses easily enough, but when the drama began to become vivid and require more power of illustration and design than he possessed, he could not progress an inch, and after several miserable attempts he put it away and forgot all about it. Ten or eleven years later, when he had quite forgotten his early efforts, he opened a book at the same poem, sat down and wrote it straight off without a hitch. But the surprising proof of "unconscious cerebration" came when, fourteen years after the song was written and published, he found the juvenile attempts in an old box, and the first three verses were, both in melody and harmony, practically identical with those of the completed song. His brain had remembered what he himself had wholly forgotten, and found the way out of the difficulty for him without his being in the least conscious of the process.'¹

Beethoven has left more complete records of the art-process in his sketch books, which show that in his case improvement and final perfection of the thematic material came as a result of elimination of redundant details. His dates show, too, that he thought over his music for a long time before he became satisfied with the result, but the process is the same in every case; the idea comes into the composer's ken, recedes into apparent oblivion, but recurs improved in itself or accompanied by related ideas. The gaps between its successive appearances may be short or long, depending on the profundity of the thought and the mind of the composer, but the composition is at last complete in every detail, and from that moment the composer will not alter it, however much it may vary from the ideals of the critics or the usage of other composers.

Brian's experience is like Mozart's in this way, that his music comes to him from the unknown, and nobody can be more surprised than he at its completeness. He has always had a habit, disconcerting to his friends, of referring to his compositions not as manifestations of aural phenomena but as third persons, existing in their own right. He does not summon them from the beyond—they intervene at their own time, and pester him to be given material existence much as the unborn in Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* pestered their prospective parents to be brought to life. 'Where do they come from, and where do they go?' Brian will say, 'for they never come again after they have been set down.' He may venture an explanation, but he cannot be sure. In his 'little' symphony there appears a burst of horns in the scherzo. 'Can it be old Boxall's hunting horn coming out again after all these years?' Boxall was a huntsman whom he used to see as a child, but the 'little' symphony was written after Brian had turned fifty. It is a long way from the simple tootle of an English

¹ Sir C. V. Stanford: *Musical Composition*, pp. 143-4.

huntsman to a glorious burst of orchestral French horns, but there is a mental connecting link in the fact that the French horn is developed from the continental hunting horn. It might be possible, but there is no certainty, as there was in Stanford's experience.

Once the music has 'completed itself' and been consigned to ink and paper it is finished. It does not come again. Other ideas begin to 'intervene'. Once he had an ambition to become a master of fugue, and at another time to write a set of a cappella choruses, but in each case a symphony or a choral work 'intervened', and the sound in his mind of the intervening composition made work on the others impossible. He hears the music in all its perfection—far better than it can be heard from mortal performers—just as Mozart did, and it drives away all interest in his previous work. So long, then, as new compositions are welling up out of his unconscious mind, he has no power of concentration on revision of other music.

Mozart has left records of similar experiences. In reply to a talented boy who wanted to learn to compose music he said:

'If one has the talent it pushes for utterance and torments one; it will out; and then one is out with it without questioning. And, look you, there is nothing in this thing of learning out of books. In the ear, the mind, and the heart is your school. If everything is right there, then take your pen and down with it; afterward ask the opinion of a man who knows his business.'

Except for the last sentence, that paragraph describes Brian's opinion perfectly. He belonged to a group of British composers who insisted that academic training dulled the inner voices. Bantock, Elgar, Delius and Holbrooke were just as emphatic as Brian in their insistence on freedom from pedantic conditioning. In each case their triumphs and their failings were due to too great a reliance on their own ears. So we have Brian indolent at revision, even on the eve of publication, and indolent at proper scoring of his slighter pieces, or the copying of band parts, because there was always more creative work waiting to emerge, or even sounding in his mind.

III

Despite the difficulties that they had to overcome, singers were found ready to give Brian's songs a hearing. In addition to John Coates, John Goss in 1917 and John McCormack in 1928, took up his work. Their difficulties were even greater than Coates's had been, for Godowski had tried the accompaniment to a setting of Herrick's *The Night Piece*, but found it impossible to play. The accompaniment was for orchestra. Later, however, the accompaniment was simplified for the pianoforte when John McCormack

took up this song, but it is still not easy to play. *The Night Piece* runs:

*Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee,
The shooting stars attend thee;
And the elves also,
Whose little eyes glow
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.*

while a companion piece *Why dost thou Wound and Break my Heart*, i quite different in spirit and in rhythm, but employs an accompanying figure very similar to *The Night Piece*:

*Why dost thou wound and break my heart
As if we should for ever part.
Hast thou not heard an oath from me,
After a day, or two, or three,
I would come back and live with thee?*

*Take, if thou dost distrust that vow,
This second protestation now:
Upon thy cheek that spangled tear
Which sits as dew of roses there,
That tear shall scarce be dried before
I'll kiss the threshold of thy door;*

*Then weep not, sweet, but this much know:
I'm half returned before I go.*

Nor was he always unfortunate with his difficulties over lyrics. Gerald Cumberland's efforts may at times have been a bad second to those they replaced, but that written for him by Lady Bantock was excellent.

The years 1905 to 1907 produced a good selection of part-songs, written mostly as test pieces for competitive musical festivals. One of the earliest of these was a setting of Longfellow's *Stars of the Summer Night* for eight-part chorus. (Brian, strangely enough, was not aware that Elgar had already set this poem.) Brian's setting was adopted as the test piece at the Blackpool festival of 1908. Barrow-in-Furness Musical Festival adopted one of his four-part unaccompanied part-songs each year—in 1907-8-9, the first being called *Soul Star*, words by Helen Bantock, the second *Lullaby of an Infant Chief*, words by Byron, and the third *Come o'er the Sea*, words by Moore. Brian was earning a reputation for attractive part-songs. Elgar retained his affection for *Shall I compare thee to a Summer's Day*, and when a Potteries choir—the Cauldon choir, conducted by John James—sang this at a private concert in Elgar's house at Malvern, Elgar had it repeated. A rondel, *In a Fairy Boat*, composed in 1907, was

eventually known to have been sung as far away as the U.S.A. —by the Seattle Orpheon in 1933—and the North Staffordshire District Choral Society sang a four-part song *Tell Me thou Soul of Her I Love* at a Manchester concert in 1908.

Difficulties there were, but he avoided the graver errors of his *Soliloquy upon a Dead Child*. Copyright caused anxiety in the cases of two songs to words by Philip Bourke Marston, through the impossibility of coming to reasonable terms with the copyright holder. Brian had to discard Marston's verses at last, and arrange for new ones to be written to fit his music. Gerald Cumberland did those for his *Faery Song* and Helen Bantock those for *Soul Star*. Cumberland's lines ran:

*Softly, softly, under earth so cool
By the margin of a pool
Lilies stir with faint surprise.*

Lady Bantock's verses are not only neater, but carry sincerity:

*Where morning is creeping
You journey afar,
God wakes you from sleeping
Oh! soul of a Star.*

*Two spirits are weary
Of loving alone,
From high dreaming heaven
They call you mine own.*

*Then listen. Ah! listen,
Come sweet, do not fear,
The soft dawn dews glisten
And Love calls you here.*

LARGER WORKS

EVEN before he wrote his *Tragic Prelude*, Havergal Brian had made an attempt at orchestral composition. The year 1899 had seen a short symphonic movement called *Pantalon and Columbine*, scored for a small orchestra. As previously mentioned, it was written without any exact knowledge of how it would sound in performance, but it nevertheless avoided the pitfalls commonly encountered by young composers for the orchestra; it was written for a body of melodic instruments in combination, with no trace of keyboard characteristics. How a young man trained in the organ-loft came to do this is difficult to understand, but the explanation may be found in Brian's temperament. He was a lad subject to wholehearted enthusiasms: his early love of the organ stood in the way of his violin playing at first, but with the thrill of the *King Olaf* performance he completely changed; his enthusiasm for the organ gave place to one even more marked for the orchestra, and although only three years had elapsed since this conversion before *Pantalon and Columbine* came to be written, the work shows no trace of organ style in its conception.

Nineteen hundred and two produced a more ambitious effort in a concert overture entitled *For Valour*, scored for a full orchestra consisting of 3 flutes and 1 piccolo, 2 oboes, 1 cor anglais, 2 clarinets, 1 bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 1 double bassoon, 6 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, 1 bass tuba, organ, harp, the usual strings, and a moderately full percussion section comprising tympani, side drum, bass drum and cymbal. The writing is distinctive to the instruments employed—even the percussion have individual parts, and are only employed together on the same rhythm at the climax on the last three bars. There is nothing in the overture, however, that could not have been learned from some scores a Birmingham conductor named Halford had lent him. The dynamics, indeed, are reminiscent of Tschaikovsky. Only the six horns and the addition of an organ part are things out of the ordinary. The opening phrase, with strings and wind rising within the bar in a rapid scale that increases in speed as it rises, is a feature that was to become one of Brian's chief characteristics in later compositions. The technical resources of the instruments are exploited sufficiently well to keep a good orchestra on the alert, but the work is not too difficult for a good amateur orchestra provided their conductor knows his business.

Nineteen hundred and three saw Brian really busy at composition, engaged on some of the best of these early works. The first of these was a grand setting of Psalm 137: *By the*

waters of Babylon we sat down and wept: when we remembered thee, O Sion.

To-day we are familiar with William Walton's Babylonian scenes in *Belshazzar's Feast*. In spirit Brian was a precursor of Walton, for out of all the hundreds of composers who had set that psalm to music throughout the ages, Brian was the first to emphasize the barbarian fury of the Israelites' lust for revenge on their captors. The ironical demand of the baritone soloist, 'Sing us one of the songs of Sion', and the loathing of the chorus in the passage 'O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery', rising to a clamour for revenge and a great climax in the orchestra as the desire goes out for dashing the children of the Babylonians against the stones, are given full emphasis. The psalm rounds off with a return to the mournful opening 'By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept'.

In contrast with the daring orchestration it must be confessed that there are some choral passages in which the influence of the Anglican Church anthem is too evident. Cherubini, Ebenezer Prout and Theophilus Hemming were rooted in Brian before he was aware of them, and his choral writing had not completely got clear of their influence. They never had anything to do with his orchestral writing, however, which from the first may smell of adventure but never of the lamp.

So it was with all the orchestral music written during 1903 and 1904. His first symphonic poem was written in the latter year on the theme of *Hero and Leander*, said to have been inspired by Lord Leighton's picture. It received only one performance—then the score and parts vanished and have not been heard of since. Brian's *First English Suite*, however, which was written during 1903 and 1904, has survived, and has had a sufficient number of performances to justify its existence, and even to invite the question why it has not been more prominently before the public during the period following the first Great War. Written as it was before Brian had had any opportunity of hearing what his orchestration sounded like, it is yet surprisingly fresh and vigorous, the instrumentation clean and lucid. It confirms Halford's remark: 'You write naturally for the orchestra—like a duck taking to water.' It is the composition by which Brian was best known in the years when he was known at all, but few of its admirers appreciated the fact that it was orchestrally a product of intuition rather than of learning.

The *First English Suite* justifies its title in much the same way as Parry's *English Symphony* does. It is written in forms not in themselves peculiar to England, but following the line of development taken by the accepted masters of the orchestra from Haydn to Strauss; yet there is something about it that a Frenchman, a

German, or an Italian would not have thought of. It is not so four-square as a typical German work, it has not the eternal cantabile of the Italian, nor the peculiar vivacity of the French. It avoids, too, the modern British tendency to build concert-room music on a foundation of folk-song; folk-songs tricked out with all the artifices of modern tonality and instrumentation were an incongruity to Brian, and there is this to be said in his favour, that they are often employed because they are the fashion and in line with the policy advocated by leaders in modern British musical thought.

Brian was brought up in rural surroundings. It is difficult to describe the horror with which the impoverished farm workers west of Dresden regarded the prospect of having to find work in 'the pots' or the mines. Brian, however, never heard an English folk-song until he came to hear them in the concert hall. True, there were maypole dances each May in the village of Endon, five miles east of the Potteries, but they dated only from 1845 and the music was provided by the nearest brass band playing such music as the village schoolmistress suggested, and *The Keel Row* went as well as anything. Pagan customs survived in North Staffordshire as elsewhere, and as a boy Havergal Brian remembered how his father used to join a party of men each year on the night preceding the summer solstice, climb Lightwood Hill—the highest point thereabouts—remain on the hill all night and at the rising of the sun sing Spofforth's glee, *Hail, Smiling Morn*. This custom may be older than Christianity, going back to primitive sun-worship; only the music changed, and that with the taste of the singers. Some old folk-song was deserted for the glee because the singers had discovered the greater joy of part-singing. There was no change in the custom or in the method of observing it—only an artistic development. This is the true reason for the decline of folk-song during the nineteenth century; there is no evidence that the industrial revolution ever stopped people from singing *something*—quite the contrary. During the early nineteenth century oratorio choruses in London were sung by north-country choirs, their women members gaily referred to as 'the Lancashire witches'; and even before that, in John Wesley's journal we find that when visiting Burslem he was awakened by a group of local Methodists singing under his window a hymn to a tune from Handel's *Judas Maccabaerus*. The decline of songs associated with daily work may be brought about by changes in the nature of the singer's employment, but for the change of taste in songs whose only purpose is to delight man in his leisure hours we must look elsewhere than in a casual mention of the industrial revolution.

Here is the key to Brian's outlook on national music—it no more looked towards folk music than Elgar's did, but it was

English. The fifth movement of Brian's *First English Suite* is entitled 'Hymn' and is in ternary form, the first and third sections (the hymn-like sections) scored for brass alone, with a contrasting middle section in conventional passage-writing scored for strings with solo violin and solo 'cello. Hymn tunes were the true successors of folk-songs in industrial Britain; from the first Boer War onwards the unquotable words of soldiers' songs have been set to common hymn-tunes and the second subjects of military marches, which are simply more rousing tunes in hymn-forms. The music-hall chorus was a hilarious development of the same basic form—indeed, religious revivalists well knew the secret of their attraction. Brian came from common English stock and his earlier music has this justification—that it is an honest development of the spirit of England as he saw it.

There is little of interest in the first movement of his *First English Suite*, entitled 'Characteristic March'. It is not a military march. The bassoons pump out the first subject in true rustic fashion, but the marchers have neither the heavy feet of Beethoven's rustics nor the charm of Grieg's—they are plain English people. The second subject is a legato theme for strings and wind, and the two themes, alternating, swell to a climax at the end. This movement is lightly scored, and the second movement scored even lighter, with no brass except two horns. It is a valse with an intriguingly flexible melody running in five-bar phrases. This and the next movement, entitled 'Under the Beech Tree', are his first essays in orchestral music—the *Pantolon and Columbine* sketch written in 1899. The fourth movement, entitled 'Interlude', goes all sweet and dulcet with mixtures of muted and pizzicato strings, celesta and harp: it is harmonically very simple, as indeed all the previous movements have been. The next movement is the hymn previously mentioned, and the last movement, entitled 'Carnival', rollicks with merriment from beginning to end. Written for the full orchestra, it is made up of roaring slapstick interspersed with sections depicting Dancers, Punch and Judy, the Fat Lady, the Sleeping Beauty, and indeed all the fun of the fair. Some of it is enough to offend the prudish. What composer but Brian has had the audacity to chant *God Save the King* on muted trombones with the bass drum unimaginatively banging out the rhythm in a style that belongs certainly to the show-ground and occasionally also to the Salvation Army, while Judy screams her hysterical shriek from the piccolo and Punch stabs in a nasal sneer with a couple of muted trumpets? Such things are not done in polite society, but since when has a northern 'wakes' been polite? During the preceding movements Brian has had his tongue in his cheek, in the last he puts it right out, and his fingers to his nose. Everybody in the orchestra goes noisily mad and ends merrily out of breath.

THE BUBBLE REPUTATION

THE year 1907 saw the most rapid increase in popularity that ever came to Brian. It saw the first performance of three works, one of which had a reception quite beyond anything that a new composer had a right to expect from a London audience. The three works were *By the Waters of Babylon*, for baritone solo, choir and orchestra, and two orchestral works, *For Valour* and the *First English Suite*.

The suite had its first performance by Leeds Municipal Orchestra on January 12th of that year. Leeds and Sheffield were both making efforts to establish their own orchestras, but, like some thirty other towns in the North, they were still to some extent dependent on visits from the Hallé Orchestra, although in choral music both cities had for long been held in high esteem. Brian sent his score of the *First English Suite* to H. A. Fricker, the Leeds conductor, and received a reply saying that the work would be performed provided Brian furnished the necessary orchestral parts.

Brian detested the hack-work of copying parts. Already, however, he had lost the chance of a Bournemouth performance through this disinclination, and it was clear that he could never expect any of his orchestral works to be performed unless he would undertake this task, for he had not got enough money to pay for the work to be done by someone else. He remembered however his experiment in lithography, which had successfully produced copies of his part-song, *Shall I compare thee to a Summer's Day*, and decided to repeat the process with the string parts of the *First English Suite*. He consulted Mr. Wood, of the firm of Wood, Mitchell & Co., of Hanley, and together they worked out an original scheme for producing the parts. Brian made a fair copy of each of the string parts on the special transfer paper with the special ink Wood provided, using large sheets of paper, so that when the work came to be performed it would be unnecessary for the players to turn over a page during the course of any movement of the suite. This ingenious arrangement has since become usual with dance-band parts, but has not come into general use for serious music. The wind, brass, and percussion parts, of which only one of each was required, were of course to be played from manuscript.

Brian travelled to Leeds to hear the suite performed—understanding that Fricker would conduct the orchestra. To his surprise, however, Fricker informed him on his arrival that it had been advertised for the composer to conduct; nor was this all—

out of a full orchestra of some seventy players, only forty were present at the rehearsal in the afternoon. Fricker explained that this was in consequence of the Leeds Corporation's decision to cut down expenses. Brian began to understand now why the composer was expected to conduct. He did the best he could with the time at his disposal, but the absence of brass at the rehearsal meant that a considerable risk would have to be taken at the evening's concert.

His fears proved to be well founded. Things went reasonably well until the fifth movement—the hymn. Here the brass did not seem to understand that they were to play alone; some of them started with the beat and some didn't. Those who didn't tried to pick up their parts later with a most unholy result. Brian did the only thing possible—he stopped the orchestra and started the movement again. One never knows how a Yorkshire audience will take such a situation: in the county of broad acres they have a way of sitting back in their chairs determined not to enthuse unless they are satisfied that they are getting their money's worth; but on the other hand they are a big-hearted people with a soft spot for a good trier. Fortunately the latter quality prevailed—they applauded vigorously. Brian was told on his return to the ante-room that he should not have stopped and restarted the brass under any circumstances, as it made the men look fools and he would never be forgiven. In consternation he went round to see the men after the concert and apologized, but it was quite unnecessary—the men knew as well as Brian that the want of rehearsal had brought about the catastrophe, and they complimented Brian on having done so well.

The press was condescending but sympathetic:

'At the Municipal concert on January 12th, Mr. Fricker introduced two works by young native composers. . . .

'The other novelty was a suite, entitled "English", by a young composer from the Midlands, Mr. Havergal Brian. The six brief movements are suggested by the different aspects of a country fair, and leave behind them this dominant impression—that the composer has ideas. Colour and atmosphere he can express, but in form he has hardly found his feet, and there is a certain patchiness of effect which on a first hearing seems to be the chief drawback to a composition which is highly interesting and full of promise. It should in fairness be added that the opportunity for rehearsal had been much too limited to secure such a degree of finish as would enable complete justice to be done in the performance, which occasionally lacked finish.'

By the Waters of Babylon was performed in Hanley three months later. Since the decline of the North Staffordshire Triennial Festivals it had not been possible to produce first performances of new works in the Potteries. Elgar had conducted a performance

of *The Apostles* in 1905 with the same choir that had been responsible for the first London performance of *Gerontius*, but *The Apostles* was by 1905 an accepted work. Elgar's popularity was as great as ever in the Potteries, and he appreciated their love of his work. In the same year, however, Sir C. Hubert H. Parry conducted his oratorio *Job* and a fairly representative selection of his works, including the *Symphonic Variations*, the ode, *Blest Pair of Sirens* and a song *The Soldier's Tent*, but failed to make a good impression. There was a poor attendance and a severe loss had to be borne by the choir in consequence. The local press had continually referred to Parry as 'the acknowledged leader of the contemporary English school of music', and blamed the weather for the poor attendance, but it was a thin veil to hide the truth that *Job* was unacceptable to choristers who revelled in *Gerontius* and *The Apostles*. They were bored at rehearsals and so was the audience at the concert. It ended in an incident which must have made it obvious to Parry that his music was not for these people. It had been arranged for Parry to conduct all the programme, including the final overture—*Raymond*, by Ambroise Thomas. Why a more effective finish had not been arranged it is not possible to say, but after two hours of Parry, *Raymond* was so welcome that the audience demanded it again. Not anticipating an encore from a previously lukewarm audience, the orchestra's librarian had collected the parts while Parry was acknowledging the applause, with the result that the audience had the spectacle of the leader of the English school of music and the drummer handing round orchestral parts to the players in order to repeat Thomas's *Raymond*.

Brian had been one of those responsible for the suggestion that Parry should be asked to visit the Potteries and conduct his works, but Parry never knew that Havergal Brian had a hand in it. The choral society looked for modern British compositions that would test their superior skill, and Parry's *Job* had not proved virile enough to hold their attention. Bailey put forward Brian's own work for their consideration, and Brian suggested Granville Bantock's *Omar Khayyām* as an effective work to occupy the other half of the programme. Ever since a youthful journey to Birmingham to see Halford, Brian had wanted to meet Bantock, but the opportunity had never come. Once he came near it. On an annual choir outing he had gone with his Odd Rode friends to New Brighton, and there he found Bantock behind a tarpaulin in a semi-built building rehearsing the prelude to *Tristan*. (It later came to light that Bantock had no business to be wasting the orchestra's time with Wagner that afternoon, for a programme of light music was due in the evening.) With the decision of the North Staffordshire District Choral Society to

perform *Omar Khayyám* and *By the Waters of Babylon* on the same evening, however, Bantock and Brian got in touch with each other on the important question of the orchestra, and from that beginning developed one of the strongest friendships in musical history. The two men did not agree on all questions—politically they held different views—but they showed towards each other an unswerving loyalty that the hardest blows of fate were unable to sever. They entered into the same fanciful land of humour, inexplicable to the uninitiated. They referred to each other in their letters as Crusoe and Friday; they had their monkey, their crocodile and their cockatoo—later was added a cock robin—and who these were nobody but they themselves knew. Later Brian made another name for his friend—Greatheart—and never was a title more richly deserved.

Their first meeting, however, was rather embarrassing to Brian, who took some of his songs for Bantock and his wife to see. They played them over and said 'Debussy'. Brian has always held a firm conviction that since he is practically self-taught his music cannot reveal traces of the influence of other composers—besides, he had no knowledge of Debussy at that time. The Bantocks were charmed with the songs, and sincere in their praise, so his momentary disappointment soon vanished.

This was not the only experience of this sort. Halford looked at his early scores and said 'Tschaikovsky', and there is an article by Gerald Cumberland which begins:

'I saw Havergal Brian for the first time on December 2nd, 1905. He had come to Manchester with the score of *By the Waters of Babylon* under his arm, and a great love of Elgar in his heart. The psalm, written for solo, chorus and orchestra, was coloured with Elgar's individuality; something of the harmonic texture and in the orchestration, something difficult to fix but impossible to deny, irresistibly recalled the composer of *The Dream of Gerontius*. Brian is not a pianist; that Saturday afternoon he played his psalm through with a plentiful use of the loud pedal, and with an energy that was both an example and a rebuke. The following morning he played it a second time and in the evening still once more. Slowly—for my mind does not work quickly in these matters—I began to perceive that here was a man who had something definite to say: who would say it, no matter what the obstacles, and who would eventually say it in his own manner. From that moment I pinned my faith to him as a composer; and his subsequent development has realized all my expectations.'

The first performance of *By the Waters of Babylon* took place at Hanley on April 18th, 1907, Brian conducting. Brian was not completely satisfied with the rendering, and many local musicians got the impression that the work was too ambitious for a young composer, but it is a marked trait of the older members of Pot-

teries society to try to keep a curb on the ambitious young. Brian paid little attention to their criticism, for the local press critic was kind: 'The Society very naturally took a very lively interest in securing a successful premier for Mr. Brian's work', he wrote, 'since the composer was personally known to almost every member, living his life of studied activity in their midst, and creating works which the best judges look upon as highly creditable to the English school of music. The composition, the performance made clear, is one of great merit, and as the piece becomes known so its popularity will spread. It undoubtedly has a future.'

Five months later came the first London performance of Brian's *First English Suite*, at Queen's Hall under the baton of Henry J. Wood. The London press was better able to report on works in the metropolis than in the lesser provincial cities, and there is plenty of matter from which to choose. The *Musical Times* said:

'Previous to September 12th few Londoners had heard of Mr. Havergal Brian. He is a well-nigh self-taught composer, born in North Staffordshire in 1877 [*sic*], and in the North, notably in Hanley, his compositions have won much esteem. They include three Psalm settings for orchestra and soli, *Burlesque Variations* for orchestra, a symphonic poem inspired by Lord Leighton's *Hero*, an *English Suite* and an overture *For Valour*. The suite, originally produced at one of the Leeds Town Hall Municipal Concerts in January last, was performed for the first time in London on September 12th.

'The poetic basis of the suite is an old English country fair. Rustics assemble to a spirited march, whereunto a humorous element is imparted by the prominence given that most rural of all instruments "the loud bassoon". The next number is a waltz, not of modern sentimentality, but a rhythmic measure that stirs the pulse; its influence, however, upon the dancers passes to an amorous episode entitled "*Love under the Beech Tree*". Presumably the village has only one such trysting place, a state of affairs that must have caused occasional inconvenience. That the beech tree is not far from the dancers is evident from the strains of the waltz that occasionally mingle with the *tête-à-tête* sentences. The fourth movement, entitled "*Interlude*", takes one away from the fair, for the composer says it is "an attempt to convey in sound the emotion which arose while gazing from the Hanchurch Hills, in Staffordshire, in the direction of the Wrekin in Shropshire, the whole country suffused in brilliant sunlight". Still farther from the scene of the fair is the next section, in which a hymn-like melody plays a prominent part; but with the concluding movement a return is made to rustic revelry, and a series of episodes introduces us to such sundry side-shows as "Punch and Judy", a "Sleeping Beauty", and "The Breathless Lady", the latter represented by a version of the "dancers" theme played "with mock solemnity" by trombones and tuba, shortly after which the work ends in a spirit of carnivalism. One is conscious that the composer is somewhat weak in the art of thematic development, but there is a freshness and significance in his music which indicates creative power.'

63 Harley House
N.W. 5

April 26th

C844

My dear Havergal Brian,

So nice to see your handwriting
again after this long gap, but alas! the
"Proms" were all fixed up some weeks
ago & the proofs, so I am told are out, &
being corrected - therefore the "Tiger" must
wait until after my jubilee season.

So sorry - all good wishes & kindest regards

Sincerely yours,
Henry J. Wood

Facsimile of Sir Henry J. Wood's last letter to
Havergal Brian.

The *Musical Standard* displayed a more enthusiastic pen:

'It was not surprising that honours fell to Mr. Havergal Brian after the performance of his *English Suite* at Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts on Thursday, September 12th, for it is a work of considerable interest. From the point of view of orchestral tone colour it was a triumph. His use of the orchestra is especially good, and throughout the work the varying colours of the instrumental palette were adroitly chosen and harmonized. That is an achievement in technical skill which few writers can attain; we hear so much mist and mud in modern orchestration. Neither was the scoring of this work reminiscent, it had a freshness and breezy vigour which can be broadly described as English.

'In modulation, Havergal Brian brings a new touch, and in the first two movements, *March* and *Valse*, there were many striking and individual transitions. The Suite has an honest face, there are no false heroics and, heaven be thanked, no puling melancholy in this music; and humour was much in evidence in the last movement. Typifying some scene of a Carnival, this last section had a brief interpretation of a Punch and Judy show; the scoring and ideas of this section were especially amusing. The motive was scored for piccolo and side drum, and this led to the theme of "God Save the King" scored for muted trumpet and trombones. The mere association of (carnival-like) loyalty with a Punch and Judy show is just a stroke of bombast of which English people are truly capable; it is a motive suited to the brain and pen of Bernard Shaw or Chesterton, and would set either of them off on a play or a paragraph. I am wondering whether Brian is a satirist at heart, or whether he only sets out to chronicle.

'On the whole, this work of Brian's is a worthy contribution to our British school. The composer achieves what he sets out to do. It is not a subjective work, but more a musical transcription of an English country fair, and must be judged from that standpoint. The music, except in a few places as in the third movement, "*Love under the Beech Tree*", has that objective non-introspective quality which is so much a feature of our times; although one cannot say that the thematic material strikes very newly upon the ear, there is yet a personality in the work.

'Mr. Henry J. Wood took a tremendous interest in its interpretation, and it was very evident that his orchestra enjoyed their labours; for, after all, it is something to an orchestral player that his work counts, that the characteristics of his instrument are not overlooked, or "crowded out", and in this particular work the orchestral tints gleamed,—that is the word,—and the various groups of tone, strings, wood, brass, percussion, were each excellently written for.

'Every discovery of musical creative talent is important to our countrymen because it is only by an overwhelming army of talented and diverse abilities that the many hindrances of our musical life can be overcome. The public, the publishers, the performers, the press, will all respond to an inevitable fact, they always do, since they deal in inevitable facts. We have chosen, for constitutional purposes, that the majority shall decide, they do decide both in civil and impolite

matters, also in music; all we can do is to transform lassitude and indifference into enthusiasm and vitality. Creative minds alone can arrange the transformation, they always were the world's ransomers; yet between them and their ideals is ranged an unproductive and negative force. The creative gift is a natural force, the only one which the world denies existence to.'

Again and again Brian was recalled by the audience. Wood was jubilant. 'Here I have been conducting novelties in London for thirteen years', he said, 'and this is the first real success I've had.'¹ Corder and Wallace were in the room at the time, and Kling, the director of the publishing firm of Breitkopf and Hârtel. Kling asked Brian to call on him the following morning with a view to having the suite issued by his firm. In a night Brian had become acceptable as one of our most promising musical hopes. Others there were whose music ought by judgement of the critics to be making history, but Brian's case was that while the critics thought the *First English Suite* immature but very promising, the audience was delighted with it: even Wood was surprised.

Going to the hall that night in a four-wheeler, Wood had said to Brian. 'Think what it would be—a suite written for all the modern instruments and all the ancient ones—each with a distinctive part. Some composer ought to try it.'

Breitkopf and Hârtel issued the score and a set of parts of the *First English Suite* before the end of the month, and the next month saw Brian again at Queen's Hall for the first performance of *For Valour*.

For Valour had not the same effect on the Queen's Hall audience as the Suite, but it was more interesting to the musical authorities. The press reports did their best without risking too drastic a commitment of professional reputation.

'A new overture entitled *For Valour*, by Mr. Havergal Brian, was performed for the first time on October 8th, in which the composer was inspired by a passage from Walt Whitman's "Drum Taps" commencing "Adieu, dear Comrade", and ending, "To fiercer weightier battles give expression". Mr. Brian has certainly given weighty expression to the martial character of his subject, and when the brass of the Queen's Hall find on their music the direction *ffff*² brazen results are inevitable. Apart from this over-generosity in dealing with the brass, Mr. Brian's overture is a convincing and brilliant production. He has invented some capital themes, treated them interestingly, and shown musical resource.'

¹ An overstatement, no doubt said in the excitement of the moment.

² The parts are actually marked *fff*.

CONTEMPORARIES

JOSEPH HOLBROOKE wrote: 'I came away from hearing *For Valour* feeling as if I had been scalped.' Holbrooke said many things like that: he had an affinity to the works of Edgar Allan Poe, and a tendency to see the horrible in music. No musician more earnestly strove to advance the cause of the British composer in Edwardian times than Holbrooke, but it is doubtful if any man did more damage. Time, moreover, made no difference to his opinions, for as late as 1925 he issued a book on *Contemporary Composers* in which he described *For Valour* as 'another powerful assault with jagged edges for all the players. Not eclectic, this music, but individual, and iconoclasm let loose'.

In fact, *For Valour* was an early work. The instruments are employed with an understanding that is a pleasure to orchestral players, and the directions given are particularly helpful to them and their conductor. These early works of Brian would be excellent material for the advancement of good amateur orchestral style, were they but known to conductors of such societies. Another criticism typical of Holbrooke was his remark on the *Soliloquy upon a Dead Child*, which he described as 'an appalling song. It revels in the macabre. The universities have not yet the human emotions and aspirations under control'.

The universities were Holbrooke's King Charles's head; having had to struggle hard for his musical education, he had a contempt for all who came by it easily.

Brian first met Holbrooke at the house of A. J. Jaeger, in Muswell Hill, the day after the *première* of *For Valour*. Brian went to play over some of his compositions to Jaeger, who suggested that Holbrooke might like to hear them: (Jaeger considered Holbrooke to be the most gifted of the younger British composers). Holbrooke arrived on his bicycle, his pockets bulging with his own manuscripts; he heard Brian play through *By the Waters of Babylon*, and in return played his own song, *Annabel Lee*. Brian was impressed by the sincerity of the song, which seemed to be one of the finest modern songs he had heard. Holbrooke had an impression that Brian came from Hanley, and Brian did not correct him. 'If Hanley is at all like your overture *For Valour*', he said, 'they must spend all their time fighting.'

In the lectures Elgar delivered while Peyton Lecturer at the University of Birmingham, he pointed to the work of three young British composers to illustrate the extraordinary vigour of the newly-sprung flower of British music—their names were Bantock, Holbrooke, and Walford Davies. Of these time has struck hardest

at Holbrooke, the youngest of the three—a natural consequence perhaps of his habit of sticking his chin out so far and so often—but in his early years he was looked upon as one of our most promising composers. August Manns produced his symphonic poem *The Raven* at the Crystal Palace, paying for the copying of the orchestral parts himself, for Holbrooke was almost starving at the time, and Bantock took him into his own home at Birmingham, looked after him like an elder brother and performed his works.

Bantock was doing great pioneer work in the Liverpool district also in those days. When in 1897 he had first become conductor of the newly-built New Brighton Tower concerts he had only a brass band, but within a year he had transformed it into an orchestra, which was increased to one hundred players for the Sunday symphony concerts. Before long these concerts were outstanding for their progressive spirit: modern British composers, known and unknown, were given their chance. Quite often an entire programme would be devoted to the works of a single composer: Parry, Stanford, Mackenzie, Cowen, German, Wallace, and MacCunn all had such programmes performed, and Elgar was a constant attraction with Merseyside audiences. It was the beginning of a movement that spread through the North and the Midlands, never quite so influential as the Hallé Society was in Manchester, but more courageous in that it attempted a greater social transformation than the older Hallé Society had set out to achieve.

Brian had been doing his bit in this movement before he met Bantock, for his articles in the *Musical World* constantly pleaded the cause of the British musician. Not being a resident in one of the large cities, Brian was personally unknown to the majority of musicians in the north at the time these articles began to appear. One night after a concert in Hanley given by the Hallé orchestra, Brian accompanied some of the players to the railway station. There, under the feeble glimmer of a single small street lamp, they talked of modern trends in music, until one of the players exclaimed, after listening to Brian's remarks: 'Ah! Now we've found the man who writes those articles in the *Musical World*. Well, let me give you a tip—not so much about Bantock, Wallace, Parry and Holbrooke—we know them all, and Elgar's the only one worth watching.'

'But how do you know?' asked Brian. 'What can you know about Parry's oratorios if Manchester never hears them?'

'Ah,' said Spielman, the Hallé viola, 'Manchester may not know them, but we do.'

The Hallé orchestra was familiar with the works performed by many north country choral societies, and it is possible also that

Richter tried out many works with the orchestra in rehearsal which he did not consider worthy of performance. Richter alone was responsible for the choice of programmes at the Hallé concerts, for on another occasion Brian was dining with Dr. Brodsky, the chairman of the Hallé Society, and took the opportunity of asking why so few British works were performed by his society.

'That is a question for Dr. Richter to decide,' Brodsky answered, 'we do not interfere with his choice of programme.'

Under this arrangement Manchester had become the foremost city in England in progressive orchestral music, but the main criticism of the younger musicians who were striving to establish British music more securely was that the Hallé outlook was too strictly directed towards Germany. It was not possible to break through the censorship of Richter's taste and get in Manchester what these younger people regarded as representative programmes of British music. Bantock in Liverpool was their main hope in the North, and Bantock was assisted at least morally by the traditional rivalry existing between Liverpool and Manchester. How far Bantock would be prepared to support to-day those early views of the importance of Cowen, Wallace, and Co. is somewhat irrelevant, because British music has grown and improved under the stimulus that he and others gave to it. Bantock himself was not in favour of musical nationalism; he regarded music as an art transcending the limitations of local thought—however interesting that might be. British music was growing in importance, and wider in its scope. Some of it had its roots in tradition, but the orchestra came to us from abroad, and whatever advances we might make in that department must be built on the foundations laid for us by others. British music meant not music founded on exclusively English, Welsh, Irish or Scottish idioms, but music written by British-born composers.

Here there was great need of reform. The novelty value of the foreigner and his work is higher than that of the home product, and so the British musician and his work had been eclipsed by the foreigner in all classes of British society that could afford the price of novelties. The British musician had often through choice or necessity given way to this force of opinion by copying foreign models and even by changing his name. It was against the social prejudice that made these things so common that Bantock fought, and Brian was involved in the fight both as composer and critic.

In his own district Brian saw how the balance of international cultural relations could be kept. There was a bond of union between Hanley and Düsseldorf caused by the opening of a pottery in the latter town by a firm from the former. Every three months a fresh party of workers from Twyford's Sanitary Pottery in Hanley was sent to superintend and teach their methods of work

to the German workers, returning to Hanley after their three months' spell with memories of things seen and friendships made in Germany. The English and the Germans got on well together. Mr. Twyford became president of the North Staffordshire District Choral Society in 1906 and one of his first suggestions was that the choir should visit Düsseldorf as soon as this could be arranged. The visit never took place, but many others did from various cultural interests in this country and vice versa. Political friendship between the two countries was at first sought and then obstructed according to national expediency, but neither the German working man nor his British counterpart thought of regulating their friendship by political or economic theories.

Friction came in time through the exploitation of both parties by vested interests—national or private. In the town of Leek, Staffordshire, German workers had been introduced into the silk mills to operate German machinery, and when a dispute arose between the English workers and their employers on a question of wages, the employers threatened to import more German workers to displace the English at a lower rate of pay. The argument used was that the English worker was too well provided for: his German counterpart was satisfied with rye bread instead of white, and vegetable soup instead of meat. The next election was fought with crowds parading the streets singing:

*Brown bread and celery soup
Three times a day,*

while in Germany the Kaiser's lecturers travelled round from school to school instilling into children the new doctrines of 'Einkreisung' and 'Weltpolitik', and the necessity of supporting his Naval League. Here were all the ingredients simmering that came to the boil in 1914. There is a strong case to be made out that by the development of international friendship through common cultural interests political chicanery could have been frustrated, but neither the German nor the British citizen understood the danger that government conceits were creating.

Bantock had been influenced in his student days by the music of Wagner, but the dawning of his original mind opened up a vision of the musical possibilities of Eastern culture which culminated in his setting of Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyám*. Brian had a fondness for the same poem, which strengthened the bond between them; he followed with the closest interest Bantock's campaign in Liverpool and Birmingham, and did what he could to further the same cause in his own district. The fact that Elgar was at that time in the forefront of the battle for British music added to his zeal also.

Bantock had left New Brighton in 1901 to take a position as

Principal of the School of Music attached to the Midland Institute (still retaining, however, his interest in Liverpool musical societies). In doing so he had to turn down the offer of a post at the Royal Academy of Music—his reasons for this will become clear as the results are shown. He explained his action to Mackenzie in a single Miltonic line:

Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.

The Midland Institute is not a college—it is a recreational-educative venture. It provided facilities for social life among its members, who were able under its roof to enlarge their scope for reading, music, chess, science, athletics, and indeed all the needs of a large industrial community like Birmingham. There were weekly lectures, and in due course the University of Birmingham came into being largely as the result of the initial efforts of the Midland Institute. Here Bantock thought he had a unique opening for his life's work, for he was not by any means sure that the policy of the established musical academies of those days would be able to foster the growth of music he saw taking place so rapidly in industrial districts. He recognized the need of musical training at the University, however, and was largely responsible for the foundation of the Peyton Chair of Music at Birmingham University, and for the idea that it should be offered first to Elgar.

Elgar's lectures at Birmingham University from 1904 to 1908 were widely reported, but not always with the intelligence they deserved. His reference to a Brahms symphony was reported in a Birmingham paper as being by Braham—the composer of *The Death of Nelson*—and Elgar's impetuosity prevented him from having all the patience necessary to deal with this mentality in the press. He resigned the Chair in 1908, leaving Bantock to do the work all had hoped Elgar himself would have done, but during his term of office he set the course this very sincere provincial movement followed. Elgar attacked the dry bones of academism: 'Music', he said, 'is an art of sound, not sight.' He referred to his early efforts at study, mainly derived from old German text-books lent to him by Dr. Done, organist of Worcester Cathedral. His point of view is shown best perhaps by slighter incidents related at various times to his friends without any thought that they would become known to the public. One of these is about an early experience in 1881, when he was a mere provincial violinist. One day a local music teacher named Caldicott approached Elgar with a request:

'I'm the Worcester representative of the Royal Academy of Music local examination board,' he said, 'and I'm one candidate short for a centre (i.e. a sufficient number of candidates to justify a visit from the R.A.M. examiner). Will you go in for it?'

'What are the pieces?' asked Elgar.

'Raff's *Cavatina* and Kreutzer's *Concerto in D minor*', replied Caldicott.

'I think I can play those, and will oblige you,' said Elgar.

In due course the local examination took place. The examiner heard the pieces through and then asked Elgar:

'How many quavers are there in a double-dotted minim?'

'If it's a joke', said Elgar, 'I don't see it.'

'There is no such thing as a double-dotted minim', gravely answered the examiner.

Elgar passed the examination with honours.

The examiner was Brinley Richards, best remembered—if at all—as the composer of *God Bless the Prince of Wales*.

Musical education was in grave need of reform. It was not thought desirable by Elgar, Bantock and their associates that the academies should be allowed unduly to influence musical life. In Elgar's view Brian was fortunate in having avoided their trammels, and similar advice was given him even by Dr. Richter. 'Avoid text-books. Study the scores of the great masters, it is the only way to learn.' Elgar had been taking a keen interest in Birmingham music-making for several years before he became professor at the University there, and he knew that the hope of the British composer lay in the further development of the provincial music society until it should become as strong in orchestral music as it already was in choral music. He it was who persuaded Bantock to take on the Midland Institute post in succession to the elderly Stockley, and together they planned schemes for the advancement of music in the provinces and the improvement of the lot of the professional musician. They modelled their plans on the principles employed successfully by Liszt in his foundation of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Musikverein Tonkünstlerfest*, and Elgar's lectures provided the spark that fired public enthusiasm for the acceptance of their scheme. This found expression in two different organizations: The Society of British Composers, which dealt with the publication of music in print, and The Musical League, which arranged for performances. The objects of the latter organization, published at the time, were:

'1. To foster the cause of music in England, and to promote the development of musical life and culture throughout the country:

- (a) By holding an annual Festival of two or three days' duration, at which the works performed shall consist partly of new compositions, both English and Foreign, partly of older works of musical interest which, under present conditions, cannot be heard as frequently as their merits entitle them to be. The Festival will be held each year in a different town.
- (b) By making use in the Festival, as far as possible, of the existing

musical organizations of each district, and of the services of local musicians.

- (c) By affording opportunities for composers, executive artists and amateurs, to exchange ideas upon questions of interest to musicians.
 - (d) By establishing as soon as possible a Journal that shall be the official organ of the League.
- ‘2. To look after the general interests of musicians.
- (a) By watching any proposed legislation that may affect them.
 - (b) By taking steps, when necessary, to oppose or prevent such legislation.
 - (c) By protecting the rights of composers in their agreements with publishers and with concert societies or opera houses.
- ‘3. To assist necessitous musicians of merit in cases of sickness or undeserved misfortune.’

A very strict code of rules was drawn up, intended to prevent the League from being used by its members to further their own interests. For example:

‘No member of the Committee, or of the Music Selection Subcommittee shall be eligible to have any of his works performed at a Festival of the League during his term of office.’

The committee was composed of Sir Edward Elgar (President), Mr. Frederick Delius (Vice-President), Sir A. C. Mackenzie, Dr. Adolph Brodsky, Dr. W. G. McNaught, Messrs. Henry J. Wood, Granville Bantock, Philip L. Agnew, Percy Pitt, Norman O'Neill, and Harry Evans.

The appointment of Delius as Vice-President when he was living abroad and little known in this country is the most surprising thing about this committee. It shows how closely in touch with continental affairs those British musicians were. Delius's *Sea Drift* had been performed at the *Allgemeine Deutsche Musikverein Tonkünstlerfest* of 1906, and he was therefore sufficiently in sympathy with its objects to support a parallel movement in England, although it must be confessed that he had a low opinion of the musical outlook of this country. He could not, however, ignore the fact that we were taking an interest in his work, and getting far better results than his continental friends had got. Performances in London of his Pianoforte Concerto and *Appalachia* under Fritz Cassirer and Theodor Szántó had been unsatisfactory. A performance of *Sea Drift* at the Sheffield Festival of 1908 under Henry J. Wood was better in execution but received dubiously by the Yorkshire audience; Beecham had given fine performances of *Paris*, however, and a first performance of *Brigg Fair* that satisfied Delius. Thomas Beecham took up the fight even more ardently, but had difficulty in finding a chorus able to do justice to Delius's difficult vocal parts. Two choirs, however,

were known to Bantock on whom a most sensitive conductor could rely: the Liverpool Welsh Choral Union, conducted by Harry Evans (a member of the Musical League Committee), and the North Staffordshire District Choral Society, conducted by James Whewall. Bantock asked Brian to interest Whewall in the music of Delius with a view to a performance of *Appalachia* in Hanley, and this eventually took place in April 1908, the composer conducting. Delius did not control his forces at all well, but Beecham realized that the choir was fully capable of undertaking music of this type, and under his own baton used them in performances of *Sea Drift* and *A Mass of Life* in Hanley, Manchester and London. Thus Delius came to have confidence in the organizers of the Musical League.

His heart was not in the work of organization, however, in the same way that Elgar's was, or Bantock's. Delius was too ego-centric—interested only in his own compositions. He had an amazingly sensitive ear, a childlike wonder of external things (he spent his time in Liverpool fascinated by the shipping) and a most unstable temper. At the Hanley performance of *Appalachia* he almost came to blows with Jennings, the secretary of the Hallé orchestra, over the constitution of the orchestra. It was Jennings's fault: the orchestra arrived minus seven essential instruments, and Delius was to conduct the performance.

'Call yourselves an orchestra,' said Delius, 'you're no better than a bloody village band.' Then, in a voice rising to a scream, he added, 'My God, if this country ever goes to war with Germany what a hiding you will get! You don't know the first thing about organization.'

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that the rehearsal went badly, especially as Delius had no experience with the baton. Beecham sat through it all apparently unperturbed, but went along afterwards to get the score, with the object of cueing in the missing parts. He sauntered along in his casual manner to the artist's room to find Delius gone and the score under lock and key. He cued in the missing parts from memory in the copies on the players' desks.

Nor was this the only time Beecham's prodigious memory saved the situation. At the Hanley performance of *Sea Drift* the score was lost between the time of rehearsal and the performance. Beecham conducted from memory. At the same performance Havergal Brian's tone-poem *Hero and Leander* was played, and the score and parts of this work have never been seen since. Beecham's complete indifference to routine tasks is remarkable. In 1914 Brian sent him three scores, one of which (his *Second English Suite*) was never returned. At the time of Beecham's threatened bankruptcy diligent search was made for this score

among his effects, without result; the executors mentioned, however, that they had in their possession about two thousand letters addressed to Beecham over a long period—all unopened. Intense concentration on the work in hand was possible apparently only because Beecham was able to ignore all other matters.

What Beecham was with the orchestra James Whewall was with his choir. Centuries ago it would have been said that these men were possessed of a devil. Whewall had the power to draw from his choir effects which they themselves could not conceive and which he could not explain. He took no part in choir organization, and was himself a most reticent man in private life. Few men had his confidence—he would stand apart from the company, even in the convivial atmosphere of a public house, not ill-mannered, but with an air of wishing to be alone that his friends unconsciously respected. There was something akin to clairvoyance in his mentality—he had the gift of seeing through the veil of material things to a spiritual world beyond the ken of others. There lay the secret of his genius as a choirmaster. Brian was one of the few men who gained his confidence. How far this confidence was placed can be seen from a simple conversation that took place in a railway train one morning as Brian and Whewall were travelling to Birmingham.

They had the compartment to themselves. Whewall said: 'I was awakened by my wife this morning in good time to catch the train.'

'But,' said Brian, 'your wife is dead.'

'Yes,' said Whewall, 'but it often happens.'

And he relapsed into silence.

The experience of waking at a particular time in order to catch a train is common enough, and the intrusion of a deceased wife into the dream-state is only to be expected in one who feels her loss. Few men, however, knew this personal side of Whewall.

He died in 1909, and his loss to British music was considerable. This man who had learned singing as a boy in a parish church choir out on the bleak Staffordshire moorlands—who had worked in the murk and danger of the mines until an accident so broke his nerve that he dared not again descend a shaft—who started life afresh as an insurance collector, and never gained or wanted luxury. This man played his part in a great artistic revival, unknown outside his own chosen circles, and is rapidly being forgotten now even in the district where he lived. His name appears on no memorial, nor in any book of reference. Only at his death there passed out of currency an art-force that had driven him and his fellows along a road to inexplicable beauty of choral sound. Those among whom he had worked had little skill adequately to extol his memory. The merit of these verses that appeared in a local

paper after his death lies not in their turn of phrase, but in the fact that they are wrought by one moved by the occasion to attempt an expression of respect in a form to which he was unaccustomed:

*Still is thy hand that led the tune-ful choir
Through song and chant, through psalm and solemn ode.
Inspired by genius rare and native fire,
To cheer and comfort man on life's hard road.*

*The bill of love, the glorious roll of praise,
The storm of passion and the calm of rest,
The wail of woe, the joy of happier days,
All linked in life arose at thy behest.*

*Through strains of earth, through swiftly gliding time,
Thy soul set free, on ampler pinions soars,
And hears at last the harmony sublime
That peals and murmurs through the eternal doors.*

Whewall and Harry Evans had met at the Welsh National Eisteddfod in 1901 and again in 1902 when Whewall had been the victor. The following year Evans conducted the combined Dowlais and Merthyr Tydvil choirs in a special effort to beat the North Staffordshire singers, but Whewall, busy that year with the London *première* of *Gerontius*, did not attend the Welsh gathering. Evans and his choir were successful in winning the trophy.

Evans was a child of the Eisteddfod. His earliest recollections were of rehearsals at home, where his father had the members of a choir along each evening in small numbers to practise their parts. Many of these singers were unable to read music, and the only method of training them was by ear—singing the part to them until they had it memorized. The singers were very quick to learn. Harry Evans' father worked in the steel-works with nothing between himself and the white-hot metal save a pair of tongs. He never earned more than a modest wage and was never able to satisfy his wish to buy a pianoforte. He taught his son to read music from staff notation, and through his son's efforts eventually a pianoforte came into the house, for Harry Evans learned to play the harmonium in the local Congregational chapel and at the age of twelve was appointed their organist; the post carried no money fee, but in recognition of the boy's talent the chapel members arranged that for remuneration he should receive pianoforte lessons from a local teacher who had studied at Leipzig under Moscheles. This man grounded young Evans so well in his technique that the chapel eventually arranged a concert, with the proceeds of which they bought Harry Evans a cottage pianoforte. (He had up to that time practised three evenings a week at the

house of one of the chapelgoers.) Under conditions of such hardship these people helped each other to create the musical life that was their only means of artistic expression.

They did it for love. Prizes at competitive gatherings were merely nominal in Evans' boyhood—the medal was received with more pride than the money prize—but as time went on competitive gatherings grew in size, money prizes increased until the main event of the National Eisteddfod carried a reward of 200 guineas; avarice appeared, and with it artistic stagnation. Harry Evans found himself out of sympathy with a school of thought that, having attained a high degree of skill in the performance of certain pieces, was interested in keeping those pieces constantly in the Eisteddfod programmes in order that they might repeatedly win the prizes. He left Dowlais for Liverpool, where there were no less than 100,000 Welsh people living, and among them he carried out his greatest work as conductor of the Liverpool Welsh Choral Union. He won the admiration of many of our most eminent composers, whose works he performed, and he served on the committee of the Musical League because it gave practical expression to his belief that a society in which personal interests could not be served was the best way of advancing the cause of music as an art.

To this man was entrusted the task of training the chorus for the principal choral novelty of the first Musical League Festival, held at Liverpool in 1909. It was *By the Waters of Babylon*, by Havergal Brian. Evans did the work magnificently. Elgar grasped Brian by the hand and said: 'I must congratulate you. I have been rarely so impressed. You must come to Hereford and stay with me, and we will talk about it. We will go for long walks and throw pebbles in the Wye.' But by the time he got to the platform to address the audience he had forgotten all about *Babylon*, for he did not mention it.

Harry Evans disclaimed any credit for the perfection of the performance. 'Psalm 137', he said, 'has always been a favourite among the Welsh, so of course they put their hearts into it.'

FANTASTIC SYMPHONY

THERE was a drop in Brian's musical output during 1907, occasioned by the necessity of having to devote a good deal of time to preparing for the public launching of so many of his early compositions. What it lacked in quantity, however, it more than gained in quality. One composition only dates from this year—the *Fantastic Symphony*. It brings to an end his apprenticeship period—the period during which he was composing for the orchestra without having his work put to its final test under the baton of a conductor—and it marks the culmination of that spontaneously humorous style that distinguished Brian from other composers of his age.

Joseph Holbrooke had for ten years been composing music at an astonishing rate. Much of it had been performed, but the work which had gained most favour with audiences was his set of variations on *Three Blind Mice* for orchestra. Brian chose the same theme in 1907 (Holbrooke's variations date from 1901), but Brian went further—he conceived his variations as the opening of a three-movement work which he called a *Fantastic Symphony*, for that was the only fitting name. It was not a formal symphony; none of its movements was in sonata form, and moreover it had a programme—self-explanatory because it was based on the well-known words of the nursery rhyme. The first movement was of course the variations, the second a pizzicato scherzo in which the souls of the little creatures were to be imagined flitting away to a mousy paradise, and the third movement was shamelessly headed, 'The Dance of the Farmer's Wife'.

The scherzo is now lost, because when the opportunity came for publication Brian was advised by the publishers not to retain the title 'Symphony', as the public tended to fight shy of such things; he bowed to their judgement and published the first and third movements only, under separate titles, the first one being called *Fantastic Variations on an Old Rhyme*, and the third, *Festal Dance*.

Festal Dance had its first performance under Sir Thomas Beecham in 1915 at the Albert Hall, but the variations had to wait until 1921, when Lyell Taylor played them at the West Pier, Brighton. The conductor was an extraordinary man, with a marked contempt for Brighton audiences. He played Brian's *Fantastic Variations* twice in the first programme and once in every programme during the following week, because, as he explained to the audience, it was too original for them to appreciate at a first hearing. Sir Donald Tovey later included the variations in one of the Reid Orchestra concerts at Edinburgh, and in his

programme notes said much the same thing as Taylor concerning their originality. His remarks can be read in the last volume of his *Essays in Musical Analysis*, and they should be read if only for the way Professor Tovey blends craftsmanship with humour.

That is the key to Brian's *Fantastic Variations on an Old Rhyme*: craftsmanship with humour, and in the end humorous craftsmanship. The association of the words is sufficient to set the listener's mind off along a non-musical track, and this Brian cleverly blends with the orchestration: the quick little pianissimo drumtaps with wooden sticks on the edge of the tympani, the squeaky little mordant figures from violins and high wood-wind—one cannot help associating these with the sounds of mousy feet and mousy voices; yet they are passages of abstract musical value. Then the scurrying of the chase, after the entry in the mellower instruments (violas, 'cellos, and clarinet in its low register) of the counter-melody that Professor Tovey calls 'the feminine element'. Perhaps the most intriguing touch of all, however, is in the chorale finale, where the instruments seem suddenly to don cassocks and moralize on the theme, the organ punctuating the end of each phrase with a solemn chord, and in the last seven bars grunting *largamente* from the pedals along with the string basses and lower brass, 'Did ever you see such a thing in your life'.

The *Festal Dance* stands quite well by itself as a concert piece, having no thematic connection with the Three Blind Mice. Its great attractions are its rhythmic versatility and a highly effective use of the pianoforte as an orchestral instrument. From the jubilant mixture of individual percussion figures with which the work starts, until the final climax, where the horn players are directed to 'raise the bell' and fortissimo chords from trumpets and trombones are marked 'harsh', the dance grows wilder and wilder, a veritable dithyramb. The Farmer's Wife, one feels, must have been remarkably free from the usual stock of feminine inhibitions.

In a series of articles written in 1923 and published in *Musical Opinion* Leigh Henry said that Brian's *First English Suite* anticipated in spirit Stravinsky's *Petrushka*; the *Festal Dance* marks the limit of Brian's progress along these lines, but it shows no evidence of Russian or Russo-French idioms. It is free and easy hilarity, relying for its expression on an intimate knowledge of instrumentation, and not on any recognized musical convention (folk-song or popular song) for indicating to polite audiences that this is supposed to be an impression of the proletarian in a festive mood. There is never any suspicion that Brian's rustics have been educated in the pastoral tradition that *will* keep butting into the efforts of more fashionable composers.

THE WORLD OF ARNOLD BENNETT

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE had reason to be proud of the musical successes of the Edwardian period: they formed a distinctive capital to the pillar of musical progress that had been towering ever higher since 1850; but success is a deceptive influence, useful only to those who can see it truly as a parasite on the healthy body of achievement. In any community there will be a majority incapable of seeing this, and North Staffordshire was no exception. So long as adulation was poured out in favour of everything musical that they did, they approved, but they resented criticism. So much mud had already been thrown by outsiders at their dirty towns, that they were super-sensitive to any comments that failed to embrace the worthier features of their life—their skill in pottery and in music.

How much more enraged must they be, therefore, when one of their own people showed their failings to the world. It so happened that a Potteries man had become famous throughout the English-speaking world as a novelist. Arnold Bennett strove to depict life realistically: not isolated and unconnected parts of life, but all of life, brought together and correlated in a synthetic whole. The inhabitants of the Potteries, however, were not prepared to accept any philosophy designed to justify the art of one who described Hanley as 'the town which had the foresight to bear me, and which is going to be famous on that score'. They had a feeling that the whole world was out to ridicule them (learned strangers said this showed an inferiority complex) and made no secret of their intense enmity towards anyone who dared to comment unfavourably on their character or their works.

Certainly the people of the Potteries had reason to be proud of their music. It was of their own creation, wrung from their souls in a grim period of economic slavery. Except for Swinnerton Heap, their leaders were ordinary local men who by their industry and zeal had risen in the esteem of their fellows. One such was F. A. Challinor, who started life in the coal mines and by diligent study in his spare time ultimately became a doctor of music. Compositions flowed from his pen in a never-ending stream—anthems, part-songs, and hymn-tunes. He soon built up a reputation for tuneful children's songs, written for performance at Sunday-school anniversary services. The demand for these increased until he was able to live respectably on the income derived from their sale—a thing which Havergal Brian had never been able to do on the infinitesimal proceeds of his more serious compositions.

Brian admired Challinor, but like so many composers he thought his own approach to the art was of greater value than the other man's; Brian was, moreover, by this time in secret revolt against the generally accepted principles of Christianity—a point of view at which he had arrived from his admiration of the poetry of Shelley. So long as Challinor kept to religious texts, Brian had no quarrel with him, but when Challinor proposed setting a poem of Shelley, Brian began to take a personal interest in the matter. Challinor had chosen the well-known *Lines to an Indian Air*:

*I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low
And the stars are shining bright:
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Has led me—who knows how?
To thy chamber-window, sweet!*

Brian had himself considered these lines for musical setting, and had come to the conclusion that Shelley's poem was too perfect for the purpose. 'The man who can set those lines to music', he told Challinor, 'is not born.' But Challinor thought differently; he finished the song and it was sung in Hanley by a local singer. Brian went to hear it, and his conviction hardened; it seemed to him that Challinor's song was the quintessence of temperamental dullness; set in a hymn-tune style, it belied the very existence of an atheistic Shelley—and it was not even well sung. On the way home Brian's disappointment gave way to anger, and in the critique he wrote for the *Staffordshire Sentinel* he gave vent to his feelings.

II

The first indication Brian had that his critique had aroused more than usual attention was a large crowd gathered at the base of the Campbell monument in Stoke. This statue of a local manufacturer now stands by the Town Hall, but it was originally placed in the centre of the town by the tram stop, and represented a benign figure in a frock-coat and side-whiskers, standing on a granite pedestal with half-raised hand apparently in the act of blessing a public convenience. Campbell Place was a favourite spot for open-air meetings, the one seen by Brian on this particular occasion being held by the local socialists. They were an earnest, hard-hitting lot—they had to be, for it needed courage to profess socialism in Edwardian days—and they were denouncing in no uncertain terms that arch-villain Havergal Brian.

"Who was this man who had so contemptuously criticized the

work of a man risen from the people to become the holder of a University degree?—Havergal Brian.—What right had he to criticize so distinguished a man?—Had he a musical degree?—No. He professed to scorn academical honours, but everyone knew that was another case of sour grapes.—What had he done?—He had composed a piece for orchestra that sounded like a rough house in Blackpool, and he had described it as symbolic of the spirit of Stoke Wakes. Was there ever a more deliberate insulting of the workers of the Potteries?—Was there ever a plainer case of the rot that eats into the soul of a working man when he panders to the bourgeoisie?—Contrast this man with the honest composer whom he had so foully libelled!—Challinor was unspoiled by his well-merited success as a composer. He remained one of the people. His songs were sung in Sunday-schools and chapels everywhere. Who had not revelled in his lovely tune, *Shirley*, set to that wonderful hymn 'For the beauty of the earth'?—Had Brian done anything like this? No! He had set a psalm to music and the speaker assured them it was more like Wagner gone mad than anything a Christian man would dream of associating with the Good Book.—Was Havergal Brian a Christian? Ah! Well might you ask, my friends. He is. . . ."

But Brian stayed no longer. He was amused, but he dared not stay and be recognized. Making his way up the road to his home at Hartshill, he found awaiting him a telegram from the editor of the *Sentinel*:

'COME AT ONCE, URGENT.'

Barratt Greene sat at his desk in his shirt sleeves, a mass of correspondence before him. Barratt Greene had made the *Sentinel*. A bluff, straight-speaking and straight-dealing northerner, there was little he feared in this life, and nothing in the next. He jumped from his chair to face Brian as he came into the room.

'You've got me into a b—— fine mess,' he said. 'Look at these', indicating the letters on his desk. 'Hundreds of them, all attacking you. I shall *have* to print a page of them.'

His wrath cooled after a while, and going to his jacket that hung behind the door he took from the pocket a letter and handed it to Brian.

'Keep this,' he said, 'some day it might do you a lot of good, but it's more than my job is worth to publish it.'

It was a letter from Arnold Bennett, a long letter, agreeing with all that Brian had written regarding the Shelley poem and Challinor's setting.

This letter was Brian's introduction to Arnold Bennett; they remained close friends for some years, held together partly by the realization that they had in their innocence made a common enemy of the people among whom they had been born. Havergal Brian

thought little of Bennett's letter at that time, for he was too much concerned with the hornet's nest he had stirred up around him. The *Sentinel* music critic, R. W. Ship, was reported to have said that if he ever set eyes on Brian again he would shoot him. Melodramatic, perhaps, but a popular sentiment. Popular feeling in the Potteries flares up and spreads like a forest fire. There were more letters to the editor of the *Sentinel*, but they were mild in comparison with those the postman delivered at Brian's address. Most of them were addressed to Have-a-Gall Brian; they poured scorn on his music and contempt on his character, and they were all anonymous.

'There is no life without hate or love', says one of the characters in Havergal Brian's opera *The Tigers*. Brian ought to know.

III

Arnold Bennett was then on a visit to his people in Burslem, collecting information for the *Clayhanger* trilogy.

The Bennett family had in the course of its development made for itself an intellectual environment in keeping with the personalities of its members. Frank was the musical one, he conducted a Gilbert and Sullivan opera each year with the North Staffordshire Operatic Society. Frank Bennett had succeeded his father also in the legal business the latter had built up; he lived in a comfortable house at Cobridge—the district called Bleakridge in the Bennett novels—and his brother Septimus, a sculptor, was also to be found there often. Arnold's visits to Cobridge were not frequent, but he was fond of his mother, and family feeling was strong enough to draw him from his London or Paris homes to visit the Potteries occasionally. The Bennetts' home life had much the same atmosphere as that of the Orgreaves in *Clayhanger*; in the Cobridge home Havergal Brian would sit listening to Frank and Arnold pounding out piano duets, and take a hand himself in his turn. There were discussions on literature, French and English, and these were carried on by post after Arnold had returned to his home at Versailles, for Arnold valued his brother's criticism above that of the best reviewers.

Arnold Bennett was never completely at home in any company. He lived in a world of books, and from that world he regarded intently and with huge delight the machinations of humanity—its aspirations and limitations; its realities and its shams. In sympathy he was one with Rousseau, Diderot and the Encyclopaedists—he had their passion for freedom of self-expression and contempt of artificial opinions. He could not hate humanity, but he could not help but be highly amused by its seriously paraded fetishes. In common with his most famous literary contemporaries, Wells, Galsworthy and Shaw, he was fascinated by the Edwardian

insistence on social class, and particularly interested in revealing the hollowness of middle-class mentality.

Bennett had not been born into the upper middle class—his father was a draper and pawnbroker who later became a lawyer. Indeed, of the great Edwardian authors only John Galsworthy was born into a middle-class home, and in Bennett's opinion Galsworthy's hostility towards his class was the weak spot in his work. Galsworthy did in fiction what John Sargent did in paint, and their inimical observation of their subjects seemed to Bennett to be likely to prejudice their interests in the eyes of posterity, although, paradoxically enough, their middle-class victims supported them.

It was a grave fault, in Bennett's opinion, to do anything inimical to one's interests. Although Bennett had not been born into the middle class, he had 'by a certain genius and a strict attention to business, gained the right of entry into it'. He kept his eyes open, and came to the conclusion that few artists emerged from the upper middle classes because it was 'bad form' to think. It was not possible to argue with these people; mention any other subject but the weather and they would say: 'Do you really think so?' in a tone that implied—'Would you mind very much if we leave this painful subject?' They were kindly but cowardly; amiable but desolately dull. He could not use them in his novels, for they had no character—only opinions and fetishes. Those who had to use them in works of art—Galsworthy, Sargent and Shaw—emphasized their inflexibility of outlook, and were paid for doing so just as a medieval jester was paid for mimicking his patron's friends. The author, the painter, and the musician were one with the actor, the fortune-teller or the conjurer—the middle classes paid them, and were not prepared to overlook the gulf fixed by the laws of caste between the man who works for his living and the higher social creature who has no need to do so.

This class-consciousness was, after their sincere worship of money, their chief characteristic. The world was a liner on which they travelled saloon and the useful people steerage. Occasionally they would go and view the steerage from the end of the promenade deck. Their feelings towards the steerage were kindly, but the tone in which they said 'steerage' cut the steerage off from them more effectively than many bulkheads. Curious phenomenon, the steerage! You never knew what they might do, whereas you always knew what a gentleman would do because if he didn't do it he wasn't a gentleman. Propound a theory and they would raise their eyebrows; disarrange a figleaf and they would refuse to know you.

Yet they were invaluable to Bennett because they bought books. They could be observed looking in shop-windows in a desperation

of ennui hoping for something to strike their eyes of sufficient curiosity to attract them to buy it. On the whole they patronized literature most among the arts because it offered the longest diversion at the least cost. Bennett's living depended on the necessity for these people to postpone for a few hours their boredom. Bennett thought of himself as a good craftsman and a clever salesman. He observed his customer's curiosity for the steerage, and he sold them good stories of the steerage. The steerage—at any rate that section located in the Five Towns—objected to being put on exhibition, but since they did not buy Bennett's novels in any appreciable quantity he was not practically concerned with their likes and dislikes; he admired the steerage, and he liked those in the saloon who appreciated his stories. He recognized a broad fringe on middle-class society that was worthy of respect; his contempt for the main body of that class was beyond his control, but he realized that its members were the result of social evolutionary forces rapidly becoming spent, and because of their approaching decline he felt a certain sympathy for them. But when he sat among them, clothed in correctness, and reflected on how they kept him in comfort because he helped to divert their leisure, the humour of the situation seemed to him enormous.

These were the people among whom Parry carried on his missionary campaign for British music. Of British composers Ethel Smyth came from this class, and on them she relied for her support against 'The Machine' and 'The Faculty'. Elgar married into that class, and, secure in the goodwill of both the saloon and the steerage, felt that he could ignore the occupants of the bridge. Havergal Brian was of the steerage and feeling uncomfortably cramped; he regarded Bennett's views as delightfully exaggerated, and was more keen on the exchange of literary views with him than social theory. He could not, however, avoid seeing the hypocrisy with which the official mind regarded the arts, especially evident in the Lord Chamberlain's attitude to such works as Saint-Saëns' *Samson and Delilah*.

There was a rule in the Lord Chamberlain's office that biblical subjects should not be allowed on the stage. Saint-Saëns' opera, therefore, was not allowed to be presented at Covent Garden, but it was permitted on the concert platform, where its dramatic effect was weakened by the limitations of formal dress and absence of histrionic emphasis.

In the legitimate theatre there was no official opposition to light French plays, but there was opposition to serious ones like *Maternité* by Brieux. Other plays that offended the Lord Chamberlain's department were Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Granville Barker's *Waste* and Maeterlinck's *Monna Vanna*.

A letter appeared in *The Times* asking that an inquiry be made into the operation of the censor's office; it was signed by an imposing list of dramatists, including not only later writers like Shaw, Galsworthy and Bennett, but also older men like Pinero, Hardy and Meredith. A mixed committee of both Houses of Parliament held an inquiry, and the dramatists were beaten. Against them were arrayed a host of theatrical managers, puritans and philistines. The puritans regarded theatres as haunts of iniquity, the philistines were opposed to anything serious, and the managers were in favour of the *status quo* because, once the Lord Chamberlain's licence had been obtained, they were free from any risk of prosecution, and any moral criticism directed at the plays they produced had the effect of attracting larger audiences. Under the combined assault of interests vested in private profit and conventional morality the dramatists were condemned as corrupters of youth as surely as Socrates had been by the Athenians.

Driven into a second line of defence, authors accepted the verdict of convention and pleaded necessity. The artist was an artist because he viewed human behaviour with a fresh eye. Before the committee of inquiry G. B. Shaw had argued that an artist must be 'conscientiously immoral'. Arnold Bennett started an essay on 'Why I am a Socialist' with the sentence: 'It is necessary and joyous sometimes to outrage the courtesies of public life.' Those from whom the shafts of public condemnation would never be plucked fell back on the right to live unmolested:

*I have been profligate of happiness
And reckless of the world's hostility,
The blessed part has not been given to me
Gladly to suffer fools, I do confess
I have enticed and merited distress,
By this, that I have never bow'd the knee
Before the shrine of wise Hypocrisy,
Nor worn self-righteous anger like a dress.*

Havergal Brian, who had necessarily and joyously outraged the courtesies of musical form, and had found in Shelley an antidote to conventional Christianity, accepted the fact that by the judgement of the majority he was an immoral man, and must disregard the opinions of the masses, be they public speakers, journalists, or anonymous letter-writers. He thought in musical terms that came to him out of an unconscious source that ebbed and flowed in accordance with some phenomenon he did not understand. If people were concerned to say that it had its roots in primitive desires he had no reason to contradict them, for no one knew less than he how his music came into his mind: only that in its completed form it brooked neither contradiction nor alteration; it was not fashioned by his skill, but born.

THE VISION OF CLEOPATRA

BY a series of coincidences the character of Cleopatra dominated Brian's mind between the years 1907 and 1909.

The first impingement came from a most unromantic quarter. In the spring of 1908 Brian was waiting on Macclesfield station for a train to take him to Cheadle Hulme, and after the manner of the bored, he idly explored the contents of the railway bookstall. There he found a bundle of paper-covered books marked '2d. each', among which was an English translation by Lafcadio Hearn of a book by Theophile Gautier called *Nuits des Cléopâtre*. He started to read and became so absorbed in the book that the Cheadle Hulme train went without him.

The publishers of the book probably hoped for no more appreciation than a racy title would bring, but there was more in it than that. The style was good, and the spirit of the French approach—lucid and direct—faithfully kept. Brian started to walk towards Bollington, still reading the book, and did not return until late in the afternoon, by which time he had finished it.

On his arrival home he wrote to Frank Bennett about his discovery, but Frank replied that the book was probably a fake, as he knew of no such title by Gautier; he was inquiring, however, of Arnold, who was then in Paris. Arnold replied that it was not in his library, nor could he find it in any authentic Parisian edition of Gautier's works, but he was interested and would make further inquiries. In a few days he wrote again, saying that he had succeeded in getting not only Gautier's original *Nuits des Cléopâtre* but also Lafcadio Hearn's English translation, and that the translation was the better book.

This interested Brian because he had never before heard of a translation being better than an original, and some correspondence passed between Arnold and Brian on the subject, during which the novelist mentioned that he had once written an operatic libretto on the theme of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, intended for a French composer who had entered for the Prix du Rome competition, and that Brian might like to use it for an opera.

This suggestion came to nothing because Bennett could not immediately send an English version of his libretto, and Cleopatra came into Brian's mind again from another quarter. The Norwich Festival Committee had offered a prize for a libretto founded on *Antony and Cleopatra* suitable for a cantata, and the prize had been won by Gerald Cumberland. A further prize was now offered for a musical setting of Cumberland's verses. Brian decided to enter for the competition.

From the very day he started work on *The Vision of Cleopatra*

Brian encountered difficulties. His domestic arrangements were upset, his wife being in hospital awaiting an operation, and someone started practising glissandos on the piano next door. It was impossible for Brian to think music except in perfect quietness, and the only way to carry out his task was by working at night, when the piano fiend was asleep. The cantata was finished just in time to reach the secretary of the Norwich Committee on the last day fixed for the receipt of entries.

Seventy composers submitted settings of *The Vision of Cleopatra*. The judges first appointed were Delius, Bantock, and Ernest Walker. Bantock retired after a disagreement with Delius over Brian's setting of the work, and Coleridge-Taylor was appointed in his stead. The prize was awarded to Julius Harrison. Some consolation there was, however, for after the Norwich Festival was over, Havergal Brian received a cheque from the Festival Committee as a mark of their appreciation of his setting of *The Vision of Cleopatra*, and they mentioned that the conductor, Henry J. Wood, had been a generous subscriber to the cheque.

II

This was not the end of *The Vision of Cleopatra*. Bosworth's paid Brian forty pounds for the right of publication, and the work was produced in the following year, 1909, at the Southport Festival, Landon Ronald conducting. The chorus master was Arthur Speed. Brian went to Southport for the event and almost as soon as he arrived ran into Landon Ronald and Maurice Spielmann (principal viola of the Hallé orchestra) in Lord Street. If ever a conductor was rattled to the point of throwing up his job, it was Landon Ronald at Southport. *The Vision of Cleopatra* demanded the full attention of everyone concerned in its performance. There was no instrument or voice that could for a moment be allowed to waver in its attention to the work in hand. Although Brian had scored his cantata for a large orchestra, every instrument was essential—there was no padding-out of the score for the sake of mere noise—terrific climaxes were built up, but they came as a result of the full exploitation of instrumental resources as individual units in a whole, and of thematic material suited to them. The vocal parts were elastic—a main chorus splitting at times into eight parts, and in addition a small chorus directed to be placed either off-stage or among the orchestra. Ronald complained that there was insufficient time left for adequate rehearsal of the work, and that unless he could get more separate rehearsals for wind and strings he would give up the attempt. He was, moreover, suffering from lumbago; in this condition he had to whip a chorus equipped with the average

stock of inhibitions into an adequate rendering of Cumberland's lines:

Semi-chorus:

*Oh, for the secrecy of night!
Oh, for the long and dear delight
Of gazing into loved one's eyes,
Of listening to each other's sighs!*

Over an oscillating passage for wind—five semi-quavers to a beat in triple measure—with tremolo strings, a glockenspiel rises and falls in a widespread series of fifths and fourths. A trumpet tongues an anticipatory fanfare, crescendo. The full chorus ejaculates:

The day just dawning is accursed

and, switching from the key of A \flat to E \flat by an enharmonic chord and a single glissando beat breaks into seven-part harmony on the words:

*For we are feverish with the thirst
That Venus has aroused within
The veins of us who may not win
Deep satisfaction of our pain
Until cold Winter come again.*

'If the good people of Southport only knew what they are listening to', said Arnold Bennett, 'they would lift up their hands in horror.' But Brian never quite understood what Bennett meant by it.

In many ways *The Vision of Cleopatra* is a development of the musical style employed in *By the Waters of Babylon*. Cumberland's realism had led him to represent Antony as a soldier fresh from the bloody field of battle, hungry for the appeasement of an insatiable lust. It demanded music at once martial and barbarous. Richard Strauss was the only composer who had successfully portrayed such characters in music. No doubt Brian owed as much to Strauss for his knowledge of instrumentation as he did to Wagner and Berlioz, but he followed none of them in his psychological application of tonal effects. Nor did he owe anything in this respect to Elgar: nothing could be further from Brian's conception of Roman might and primitive passions than Elgar's *Caractacus*. Brian's work offered no hostages to conventional patriotism or morality; it was conceived as a direct expression of psychological truth.

The press did its best with the problem. The *Daily Mail* said:

'This evening's concert brought forward the most important new work of the festival—Mr. Havergal Brian's *Vision of Cleopatra*.

'The work was written for the competition in connection with the

last Norwich Festival, but was only awarded second place. Mr. Havergal Brian is a native of Stoke-on-Trent, and has come rapidly to the fore as one of those younger composers of whom something is to be expected. He naturally enough favours the ultra-modern school, and *The Vision of Cleopatra* is perhaps one of the most intricate pieces of choral writing in existence. The setting is frankly oriental in texture, but Mr. Havergal Brian has not contented himself entirely with the production of strange noises from uncouth percussion instruments. There is, of course, a good deal of this, and some of his discords can only be described as ear-splitting, but at the same time the composer has been wonderfully successful in attaining the true atmosphere surrounding Mr. Gerald Cumberland's libretto, and the chorus "Great Silence is o'er everything" is amazingly clever in conception. Whether such a work will easily become popular I will not venture to say. The difficulties of performance are immense, and the size of the orchestra necessitated for its proper rendering is out of the reach of most choral societies. Nearly the whole of the afternoon was devoted to the final rehearsal, Mr. Landon Ronald taking the choir and orchestra again and again over knotty passages. Miss Phillis Lett was admirable as the great Egyptian queen. One always feels somehow that Cleopatra must be a contralto, and Miss Phillis Lett sang the sombrely-impassioned solos with no little magnetic charm. Mr. John Coates as Antony, Miss Maud Phillips as Iris, and Miss Lillie Whiteside were equally good.

Among more expert criticisms, that of the *Musical Times* may be quoted as representative of the general view:

'The following evening (Thursday) brought forward the first novelty of the festival, a dramatic cantata entitled *The Vision of Cleopatra* by Mr. Havergal Brian. The libretto of this very modern work gained the prize offered by the Norwich Musical Festival last year, and no-one can deny that the composer has constructed a very clever super-structure upon a foundation that demands dramatic treatment. In listening to the music, one has a feeling that Mr. Brian has yet to come into his own; and if "his own" should prove to be a better seeking after melody, a greater regard to form, and a less strenuous use of the orchestra, he should in due time arrive at that goal which has immortalized the great masters.'

A. J. Jaeger saw the score of *The Vision of Cleopatra*, and his simple remark weighed more with Brian than all the others. 'You must have written it with your heart on fire', he said.

■

SAID Dr. Samuel Johnson: 'A patron is one who sees a man drowning, and when he is safe, encumbers him with help.' By the time Ronald was producing *Cleopatra* Havergal Brian had found a patron. This man first took an interest in Brian after the success of the *First English Suite* at Queen's Hall, and offered him financial assistance towards the expenses incurred in the course of his musical work. Brian's earnings as a commercial traveller amounted to about fifty shillings a week, and the introduction of the *First English Suite* to the public had already necessitated a journey to conduct it at Leeds, and a second journey to London for Wood's performance there: this expense was a drain on Brian's resources. When an offer of assistance towards such costs was made, therefore, he felt relieved, and was gratified to think that someone appreciated his music to such an extent as to be willing to sacrifice money in its cause.

His patron was a strange man. He had the appearance of a Spanish grandee and some of the other qualities, too, of such a type. He had inherited a substantial fortune, on which he could have lived comfortably in retirement, but he preferred to live and work in the Potteries. Not in any way distinguished (except perhaps in appearance) he took his place in the control of a pottery, and acted as a churchwarden for his parish, but sought elevation to no public office other than the latter. Strictly honourable in every way, he was practically a slave to his conscience—any voluntary responsibility he undertook would be carried out meticulously, even when it involved loss to himself. He was in his way a devotee of the arts, for in his house was a fine library and a picture room, the latter so crammed with paintings that even the floor was covered with them; but apart from subscribing to local concerts, he had no interest in music.

For about a year he had continued to grant Havergal Brian various sums towards the costs involved in his musical work, until, with the promise of fame that came with the Norwich appreciation of *The Vision of Cleopatra*, he decided that Brian must give up his employment with the timber merchants and devote himself entirely to music. He undertook to provide for Brian and his family, and even to increase their means in order that Brian might move to a district more congenial to him.

For Brian such a change meant that he would gain freedom from economic care at the expense of his personal independence;

it was a situation calling for much thought, but Brian seems not to have seen the danger that such an arrangement would be likely to bring to one of his strongly individual temperament. The urge for composition was upon him so heavily that it outweighed his judgement. He consulted nobody about the matter, but there is psychological evidence in his dreams of the fear that preyed on his mind before the offer was made; it means a somewhat risky penetration into the domain of the unconscious, and may not be acceptable to the more matter-of-fact reader, but it is the only evidence possible of the conflict that was going on in Brian's mind as the result of his artistic urge impinging on the time needed for earning a living. The dream is best given in Brian's own words:

'I was in an old-world town (I felt sure it must be Nuremberg), walking by the side of a drowsy, narrow river. I remember the curious gables which appeared to protrude on the river path. I left the path and turned into a medieval church with a lovely Gothic interior. I sat down near the entrance to study it. As I did so I saw an extraordinary sight in the distant chancel. There in front of me was a magnificent-looking horse with its head towards the altar; on one side was a lady in riding habit, on the other side a man also dressed in riding habit. The decorative colours of the horse's saddle and the riding habits were strange and bizarre. I got the impression that the two people wanted to talk to each other and they were trying to touch hands but could not do so because of the horse's unusual height. I then left the church and made for the house where I was apparently living. I opened the door and walked inside a spacious hall. The wide staircase ran up one side of it and across the top, which gave it the appearance of a verandah. As I walked up the ancient stairs, the vibration from my ascending steps shook particles of dirt off the ceiling, which as they fell on me became phosphorescent, making an uncanny effect in the gloomy hall. As I left the verandah the phosphorescence ceased. I entered my bedroom, undressed and got into bed. I was awakened from my sleep by a brilliant white light, and as I pulled myself up in bed I saw an open panel before me with the unflinching, inscrutable face of Beethoven, the flames rising and curling over it. In my consternation at this sight, I fell sideways from the bed and saved myself by putting my hand out on the floor. As I did so, I felt something thick and hairy brush past my wrist, and saw a dog, a black retriever. This fright woke me up, and I found myself with my body half out of bed resting on my right hand on the floor, not at Nuremberg, but at Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent.'

Dreams have from time immemorial been regarded as mystic revelations of forces controlling human destinies; in recent times they have been studied more scientifically and an elaborate system of symbols, said to be very convincing to those who have observed them, classified. In simple terms, however, modern dream interpretation does not vary essentially from the practice of soothsayers

mentioned in the Old Testament; the general purpose of dreams is to provide the satisfaction of wishes not realized in daily life. Since some of these wishes cannot be realized without offending the conscience of the wisher, they are disguised as innocent objects, and so appear in dreams fantastically perhaps, but inoffensively. The man and woman before the altar in Brian's dream, separated by a magnificent horse, are symbolic of something that may or may not have been associated with music, but the face of Beethoven enveloped in bright flames can without much stretch of imagination be associated with the fiery force of musical inspiration in the highest degree. Other features of the dream are the general magnificence of its background—the town, the church, the dress of the characters and the trappings of the horse, the house with its wide hall and staircase—and the projection of the scene into a foreign country—Germany.

The reader can make his own experiments in interpretation of the details if he wishes. Two things are to be noted here: firstly, the vision of Beethoven had an alarming effect on Brian—it broke his rest; disturbed his peace of mind. Secondly, the town of Nuremburg was an imaginary town, for Brian had never been there. Later in life he saw a place so similar to the town of his dream that it might almost be said to be identical: it was not Nuremberg, however, but Lewes in Sussex—and a place less German can hardly be imagined.

Music had become a responsibility to him, a force that thrust itself upon him, but with which it was difficult to cope. The spur of inspiration goaded him on along paths that diverged more and more from the course an average working man would have to tread. The prospect of his economic life growing more and more in conflict with his artistic life disturbed his peace of mind, and the belief that in Germany such a conflict would be less acute led him to wish he were there; even so, his dream-town was typically English.

The offer of an income sufficient to meet all his needs at once resolved this conflict in his mind, and he accepted the offer without considering its implications. He became dependent on the bounty of his patron.

From this time onwards Brian became entangled in complications such as he had not previously experienced. It was nobody's fault—his patron more than kept his promise—but the clash of temperaments between Brian and his patron produced more unrest and uncertainty in Brian's mind than the difficulties of his environment had ever caused. There are certain responsibilities which surround all men irrespective of their social class; they vary according to circumstances, but they cannot be evaded by going to another country or accepting monetary help. Brian was

deceived into thinking that with the removal of financial anxiety he could ignore money. No man can do this without bringing upon himself greater difficulties than would be encountered were he to accept the ordinary responsibilities of economic life. There is a traditional belief that composers are negligent in money matters; it is a lie—most composers are aware of all the implications of simple finance, but they have generally had to fight hopelessly against the opposition of those who can drive unreasonably hard bargains. Brian, however, was really negligent in money matters, and his patron was just the opposite; they never fully understood each other, and the alliance was precarious from the first.

His patron sought no personal credit for his support of Brian. He made it clear that he wished to remain anonymous. Even in Brian's letters he was referred to as Mr. X.

Mr. X believed in self-discipline—he lived strictly within the code of rules his conscience dictated. He avoided as far as possible any course of action suggested by sentiment, and Brian could never understand this. On one occasion, after Mr. X had consented to help a man without its being known that Brian had had a hand in it, Brian wrote to thank him for showing such kindness. Back came a letter by return post saying, 'You have got me wrong—I haven't a damned bit of sentiment. Before I decided to stand by you and become your exchequer, I satisfied myself that you were the only man of genius in this country without private means or financial backing. I help you because of that and because I consider it a crime to be poor.'

He was a man who pretended to nothing and wished to live in obscurity. He had his own code of ethics, but that was all—he repressed some of the qualities essential for humanity. If the truth could be discovered it might be found that he was a man nursing some secret disappointment, but Brian had little understanding of the ways of other people's minds, or even of his own. Mr. X gave him all the money he asked for at first, but he was never a companion. When *Cleopatra* was being produced at Southport in 1909, Brian invited Mr. X to go and hear it, but he refused—he was not interested in it. Brian never asked him again, nor did it occur to him until long after the breach had opened between them that Mr. X might have been pleased to meet some of the musical celebrities he knew, even if he could not admire their music. His inhumanity puzzled Brian.

One day Mr. X called at the Brians' house with a cheque. Brian's wife said in answer to his inquiry that Brian had gone to Birmingham to see his friend Bantock. 'Hm', said Mr. X, 'I never knew your husband had any friends. He is a lucky man if he knows where his friends lie.'

This vein of pessimism ran through his character, and contrasted strangely with the humour that crept into Brian's music. They were never able to find any common grounds of belief. When Brian said on one occasion—surely most tactlessly—‘I live in a state of mystification, because I have always lacked respect for money. I never have any desire to make money and I never had any. Now you have come into my life and I have all the money I want. I repeat, it puzzles me.’ Mr. X listened, and then remarked drily: ‘There is no mystery about money. If you have enough of it you can do as you like; buy whom you like, sell whom you like, and pass yourself off at your own valuation.’ It is the commonest of philosophies, yet it was more mystifying than ever to Brian.

Coupled with this pessimism was a fickleness of purpose. Hardly had the period of complete dependence on his bounty commenced than he dropped a hint that it was not to be regarded as permanent. This alarmed Brian. He had given up his employment and with it the means of making his own livelihood, small though this had been. His position was now insecure. He asked Mr. X to state how long his patronage was likely to continue. ‘Oh, for some years yet’, said Mr. X, and with that Brian had to be content, but from that time onwards Brian enjoyed less peace of mind than he had enjoyed previously when a wage-earner. Yet the explanation of his patron's conduct was simple enough—he wished to make it clear that continuance of his bounty was dependent on the retention of his good opinion. It is a psychological weapon still commonly used by employers to ‘discipline’ their workers' political views. In Edwardian times it was more generally used to discipline their moral views, but it frequently happened that their object was the same as that of the modern employer. Mr. X had no intention of trying to direct the stream of Brian's genius down any particular channel, but as a business man he felt it incumbent on him to let his dependent know that he held both the reins and the whip.¹

II

Under the new financial arrangement Brian gave up his house at Hartshill and moved to Trentham. The cottage was in a beautiful neighbourhood, quiet, yet within easy reach of a railway station. Here he could concentrate on his musical work undisturbed. He felt lucky to have got the cottage, for there were very few dwellings in the village of Trentham at that time other than those needed for workers on the Duke of Sutherland's estate. With the approach of winter, however, he saw that he had made a mistake; the house was subject to flooding, and it was impossible

¹ Treatment not unique : cf. Ruskin's behaviour towards D. G. Rossetti.

to settle down quietly to work on account of the domestic inconvenience this caused. He at last succeeded in renting a newly-completed house nearby, but the garden was a mass of clay and builders' rubble, and much work was needed to make the new house comfortable. Little progress was made in composition, therefore, during the first year after his removal to Trentham.

He had lost touch with Arthur Bailey when he gave up his organ post at Odd Rode in 1906, but he kept in touch with Whewall until the latter's death in November 1909, his last visit being to suggest to Whewall that his choir should take the first opportunity to perform two more British compositions—Holbrooke's *The Bells* and Vaughan Williams's *Towards the Unknown Region*. These never came before the committee of the choir, and with Whewall's death the opportunity was lost. For a time the fate of the choral society lay in the balance; it was thought that the large choir would have to be disbanded, but the mining villages were determined to carry on under the original name of the society—The Talke and District Choir—and a deputation called on Brian, asking him to become their conductor. Brian replied that he thought he would be able to serve them better in other ways, and declined the offer.

It was one of many mistakes Brian made about that time, but it was impossible to see them then as mistakes. Brian acted in good faith, seeking only to serve the cause of good music, and did not see the changes that were taking place around him.

He still retained his old admiration for Elgar: he did not see that Elgar himself was in the throes of an artistic development that was taking him away from the needs of the past. Elgar had followed the line of development that had taken place in choral history from 1840 to, say, 1900, during which time the working-class choirs in England had risen from the limitations of short works—part-songs, glees and madrigals—to cantatas, and on to oratorios, but from that point onwards these societies encountered difficulties, for music was demanding greater command of orchestral resources, in which the provincial choral societies were weak. Elgar wrote no more oratorios after *The Kingdom*—his muse led him towards the symphony, and here he had to rely on the few efficient orchestras we had. This meant that his centre of interest shifted from the provinces to London: the change began to take place about 1907, and probably accounts for Elgar's resignation from Birmingham University in 1908. Apart from this, Elgar's chickens—among them Brian—were leaving the nest. In the course of his Peyton lectures Elgar had outlined the course he hoped British music would take; he hoped it would be bluff and hearty open-air stuff—in fact, Elgarian. His opinion of Brian received a shock when he saw *By the Waters of Babylon* in manu-

script in 1907, for he wrote afterwards to him, 'Let us, my dear Brian, have no more of these hatreds.' When he heard it applauded in Liverpool in 1909 he disapproved, but did not say so.

Brian could not be expected to understand that his style was offending Elgar, nor could he have altered it anyway. The breach was unintentionally widened a month later as the result of an effort on the part of Brian to do Elgar a real service.

Elgar's First Symphony had a most remarkable initial success—it received a hundred performances in its first year! One of these took place at Hanley, under the auspices of the North Staffordshire District Choral Society. (It happened only a few weeks after Whewall's death.) Brian at that time used to send short local reports to *Musical Times*, and expressed his disgust that on this occasion Elgar's symphony had been severely mauled. The editor replied that he had had other reports of a similar nature from different parts of the country. Would Brian state his opinion in the form of a letter for publication in his columns? Brian's resulting letter is as follows:

BEECHAM AND ELGAR SYMPHONY

'SIR,

'At a concert given on October 28th, 1909, at the Victoria Hall, Hanley, the Beecham Orchestra appeared for the first time in this neighbourhood. For some months prior to the concert—which was under the auspices of the North Staffordshire District Choral Society—Sir Edward Elgar's Symphony had been largely advertised. Perhaps nowhere else in the British Isles is the name of Elgar regarded with such affection as in North Staffordshire, for it was at Hanley, at a North Staffordshire Triennial Festival, that his cantata "King Olaf" was first produced. The same Society responsible for the performance of the Symphony, produced "Gerontius", "The Apostles", "The Kingdom", almost immediately after their first performances, and by so doing kept alive an intense interest in the development of Elgar's career. This interest was quickened by the announcement of a performance of the new Symphony by an Orchestra which in a short time had made a great reputation. To the dismay of those who knew the work, Mr. Beecham, in conducting, chose to give his version of the Symphony in preference to the composer's.

'The first movement was cut down one half: part of the "exposition" and the whole of the "development" were cut out, and some minutes were sacrificed in the succeeding movements. Those who know the Symphony will be astonished to hear that the actual time taken in its performance was only thirty-eight minutes. It was an insult to the composer and also to those responsible for the concert. This is surely not the use to which so exceedingly fine an orchestra should be put, to say nothing of the misuse of the genius with which nature has endowed Mr. Beecham.

'HAVERGAL BRIAN

'STOKE-ON-TRENT'

If the conductor read this letter it made no difference whatever to his friendship for Brian, but Elgar cooled noticeably. It was a long time before Brian realized that he had inadvertently alienated the affections of his hero, but he could not retract; every word he had written was in accordance with the principles by which he would have defended his own music had it been treated as Elgar's symphony had been. Too late Brian saw what had been characteristic of Elgar from the first—his fondness for performances and dislike of criticism. It may be that the conductor had cut the symphony in order to make it more acceptable to an audience accustomed to choral works but not yet quite ready for long orchestral works, but such a policy is hardly to be believed of him, and does not account for Elgar's attitude towards Brian.

As it happened, there were no more 'hatreds'. Brian's taste was moving more towards orchestral music on a Straussian basis. *Doctor Merryheart*, described as a comedy overture, and a tone-poem entitled *In Memoriam*, are the two most important fruits of Brian's period in Trentham, while of vocal works he showed for several years a continuance of his love for the verses of the Herrick period. Three of these, set for women's chorus in four parts with orchestral accompaniment, are still unpublished. One of them, to Herrick's *Go, Lovely Rose*, has been set often enough by other composers, good, bad and indifferent. *Requiem for the Rose*, by Herrick, is another thought of rare beauty.

*The rose was sick and smiling died;
And, being to be sanctified,
About the bed there sighing stood
The sweet and flowery sisterhood:
Some hung the head, while some did bring,
To wash her, water from the spring;
Some laid her forth, while others wept,
But all a solemn fast there kept:
The holy sisters, some among,
The sacred dirge and trental sung.
But ah! what sweets smelt everywhere,
As heaven had spent all perfumes there.
At last, when prayers for the dead
And rites were all accomplished,
They, weeping, spread a lawny loom,
And closed her up as in a tomb.*

Of a different cast of thought entirely was the third part-song, *The Hag*. 'I've set "The Hag",' he wrote, 'and a devilish thing it is.' It is one of the lesser-known poems of Herrick.

About this time, too—1910—came a setting of Herrick's *Mad Maid's Song*, for voice and pianoforte. 'It does sound mad', he said. 'I shall inscribe it to old McNaught.' Brian had been in

touch with Dr. W. G. McNaught, of the publishing house of Novello's, for many years, for Dr. McNaught was active in the musical festival movement in the Midlands and North, and closely associated with Elgar and Bantock in all their schemes, including the Musical League. It is a song that reveals Brian's genius for entering wholly into the spirit of a difficult poem. Madness is not a pleasant subject, and in the hands of anyone but a master inevitably would become theatrical. Herrick treats the subject in this poem in a manner that inspires sympathy and reveals a keen sense of beauty.

*Good-morrow to the day so fair,
Good-morrow, sir, to you;
Good-morrow to mine own torn hair
Bedabbled with the dew.*

*Good-morrow to this primrose too,
Good-morrow to each maid
That will with flowers the tomb bestrew
Wherein my love is laid.*

*Ah! woe is me, woe, woe is me!
Alack and well-a-day!
For pity, sir, find out that bee
Which bore my love away.*

*I'll seek him in your bonnet brave,
I'll seek him in your eyes;
Nay, now I think they've made his grave
I' th' bed of strawberries.*

*I'll seek him there; I know ere this
The cold, cold earth doth shake him;
But I will go, or send a kiss
By you, sir, to awake him.*

*Pray hurt him not, though he be dead,
He knows well who do love him,
And who with green turfs rear his head,
And who do rudely move him.*

*He's soft and tender (pray take heed);
With bands of cowslips bind him,
And bring him home—but 'tis decreed
That I shall never find him!*

Beneath the simple form of the poem lies the poor tortured mind of the maid unable to reconcile her loss with the love she still bears towards her sweetheart's memory. Insanity is never simple beneath the surface—it is the effect of a mind in conflict

The Mad Maid's Song

(Final Bars)

The first system of musical notation for 'The Mad Maid's Song'. It features a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The piano part includes various chords and arpeggiated figures.

Lento dolente.

He's soft and tend - er, pray take

The second system of musical notation. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'He's soft and tend - er, pray take'. The piano accompaniment features sustained chords and moving lines in both hands.

heed, With bands of cows - lips bind him, And bring him home: but 'tis de -

The third system of musical notation. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'heed, With bands of cows - lips bind him, And bring him home: but 'tis de -'. The piano accompaniment includes arpeggiated chords and sustained notes.

ritard. *Tempo.*

creed. That I shall nev - er find him.

The fourth system of musical notation, which concludes the piece. It includes the lyrics 'creed. That I shall nev - er find him.' The system is marked with 'ritard.' (ritardando) and 'Tempo.' (tempo). The piano part features a final arpeggiated figure in the right hand and sustained chords in the left hand, marked with 'pp' (pianissimo).

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Ending of *The Mad Maid's Song*. Reproduced by permission of Messrs. J. & W. Chester, Ltd., London.

with itself. Compare *The Mad Maid's Song* with the same poet's *Comfort to a Youth that had Lost his Love*.

*What needs complaints,
When she a place
Has with the race
Of saints?*

In this case the mental conflict aroused by grief at the death of the beloved is resolved by the philosophy of religion. Brian set *The Mad Maid's Song* with a very simple voice-part following the rhythm of Herrick's verse and depicting the limited outward utterance of the poor distracted maid, but the accompaniment is mainly across it, in triplet figures against the twos of the voice part. The melodic line, too, has an air of bewilderment suited to the nature of the poem. The pianoforte writing is effective, belonging to the instrument.

The song was a great favourite of Lia Rosa, who sang it constantly at her recitals until about 1939.

The comedy overture, *Doctor Merryheart*, is the most interesting composition of Brian's Trentham period. The title is misleading, for it was conceived as a symphonic poem. In construction it is a set of continuous symphonic variations on two converging lines:



The scoring shows a composer sure in his knowledge of orchestral resources. The earlier compositions had seen a gradual development of the individuality of the more cumbersome instruments; the double-basses never at any time had slavishly followed the 'cello part, even though there are long stretches in the *First English Suite* and *For Valour* where they march together in the approved classical style. In the *Fantastic Variations of an old Rhyme* and the *Festal Dance* the basses are independent of the 'cellos except in such places where extra power or a ponderous effect is deliberately sought; the bass tuba, however, doubles the bass trombone. In *Doctor Merryheart* the tuba is as independent as any of the other instruments. This was a source of some amusement to Brian, for the idea of a bass tuba having a soul of its own was new. After the first performance the Birmingham player wrote, 'Thank you for having written so fine a part for my instrument. It is such a change after doubling the G trombone so constantly.' But

when Brian heard Wood's London players rehearsing *Merryheart*, the tuba player handed up his part for Wood to check, thinking it might be wrong. It agreed with the score.

'Is it funny?' asked the tuba player.

'I think it is intended to be rather humorous', answered Wood.

There were difficulties for the conductor as well, but worth while, as Sir Dan Godfrey found out. 'Merryheart only revealed himself after an hour's rehearsal', he said.

The score is full—indeed, packed. There are few places where the whole orchestra (except the percussion) is not in action, and it is a fairly big one, comprising piccolo and 3 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, double bassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, bass tuba, tympani, glockenspiel, side drum, tambourine, triangle, bass drum, harp, and the usual strings. *Doctor Merryheart* is programme music in the full sense in which that type of music was exploited by Richard Strauss. The score is preceded by a short literary preface, which tells the story the music is intended to describe.

'Doctor Merryheart was well-known as an astronomer of original views. His geniality and perpetual smiles earned for him the name of Merryheart. He advanced the strange theory, in a happy persuasive manner, that the sun, moon, earth and "all that therein is" are part of a vast diatonic scale, having its tonic in the centre of the Milky Way. He would not admit the value of the spectroscope and he held the view that there are no chromatics. Merryheart was of the opinion that we were on the eve of the discovery of the music of the universe, and it would be found in the diatonic scale. It was difficult to believe that he wished to be taken seriously, for his deep reflections on the mystery of the universe were expressed to the accompaniment of a continuous series of smiles. He always carried with him an illustrated edition of Daudet's delicious satire *Tartarin of Tarascon*, and knew it so well that he came to look on Tartarin as a real hero. If his days and evenings were spent in such whimsies, his nights were serious ones. He was a great dreamer. In his dreams he was prone to loud mutterings, and was known to exclaim, "I must shoot that lion". He suffered from nightmare, and various ghosts would pass before him. He always woke in a state of great excitement.'

Brian's form of humour had undergone a change between the period when he wrote the slapstick of the *First English Suite* and that which produced the *Fantastic Symphony* with its variations on *Three Blind Mice*, and the *Dance of the Farmer's Wife*, and the process went still further between the latter work and *Doctor Merryheart*, which is a musical essay in intellectual leg-pulling, somewhat akin in spirit to Richard Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*, with captions written in the score thus: 'Whimsies and Sunshadows', 'Smiles and Storms'; then the dreams: 'Asleep in the

arms of Venus', 'Merryheart as a Chivalrous Knight chases Bluebeard', 'Merryheart fights a dragon', 'Merryheart leads a procession of heroes', 'Merryheart Awake', and 'The Dance of Merryheart'. One can imagine the audience following their programme notes closely and picking out the various episodes so ardently that they have no ears for the music as such. Naughty Brian, having led them so charmingly down the garden path, then remarks naively in his old age: 'Funny that nobody has noticed that it isn't an overture at all, but really a continuous set of symphonic variations on two converging lines.'

He enjoyed this kind of joke greatly at the time *Merryheart* was written. He used to appear with a moustache, then without it—and once there was a beard, the greatest joke of all. Arriving at Euston Station in a cab one day with H. J. Wood, Brian turned to pay the cabby and then looked for his bag.

'Your brother took it, sir,' said the cabby.

The train took him to Liverpool. There at the barrier he saw Thomas Beecham's valet, Harris.

'Good evening, Mr. Bantock,' said Harris.

Both in one day. Life was indeed worth living.

There were certain disadvantages attendant on this habit of leg-pulling. The more solemn members of society regarded it with disapproval, and looked for some excuse to hit back. They liked to hit secretly and below the belt. Brian knew nothing of this, for he was not interested in many people, and his friends were all among people interested in the advancement of good music. There were trips occasionally to London to hear some new production, but his greatest joy was in musical excursions with Bantock. A telegram would arrive, and Brian would be off on a morning train to Crewe, there to join Bantock on the train to Liverpool. They flung themselves gleefully into the work of rehearsing and performing whatever new composition they had determined to make known, Sibelius, Elgar, Delius, Bantock or Vaughan Williams. In between were merry gatherings with fellow adventurers and solemn bursts of leg-pulling with the more gullible.

Bantock had already given to the world his two great musical settings of *Omar Khayyām* and was verging on to the creation of *The Great God Pan*. It is an open secret that when writing the verses for his work, Lady Bantock had her husband's character in mind, and, as H. Orsmond Anderton truly remarks in his biography of Bantock, he chooses to see Pan as some of the later classical poets used him, for an expression of the neo-paganism with which he identifies himself, both in its Arcadian aspects and in its larger views of life:

*Fold beauty to the soul,
Clasp the whole world's completeness,
And, filled with hope's immortal ecstasy,
Drain to the full the cup of love's desire.
Come, sing of joy.*

If necessary in defiance of the world as it existed outside his own personality:

*Hearken, O world!
To thy heart I blow:
And I twist, and take it
In strong hands, and break it.*

Under the influence of such a virile personality, Brian's admiration might have led to imitation. By heredity and experience Brian was very different from Bantock, and but for the latter's breadth of outlook, and understanding of the course Brian's music might be expected to take, Brian might have lost his artistic individuality in copying the style of the greater man. A consideration of the work of these two friends however will reveal the fact that they were moving artistically in opposite directions. Bantock's early admiration for the modern German School had given way to the influence of the modern French and Russian schools—gorgeous splashes of tone-colour, strange discords and elusive harmonies: Brian was veering towards the exhaustive development characteristic of Strauss.

This is in evidence not only in *Doctor Merryheart*, but also in the companion orchestral work of this time, the tone-poem *In Memoriam*. This work had to wait until 1921 for its first performance, which was given in Edinburgh and Glasgow by the Scottish Orchestra under Landon Ronald. By that time the world had been thrown into chaos and was in process of social reconstruction. New ideas were coming into vogue, and those of the pre-war period were suspect among the younger generation who had suffered most as a result of them. Ronald was not inclined towards the new music: he had a certain fondness for Tschaikovsky which Brian was apt to regard as shallow, but he was one of the few who remembered Brian's music in the age of the Bright Young Things of the 'twenties. Millar Craig wrote the programme notes for the Edinburgh performance:

'Published in 1913, this work, which brings its composer's name for the first time before a Scottish audience, is among the pieces which have a bitter grudge against the Great War. It had not had time to establish itself before the attention of Europe was forced into other channels, and has had to wait an unfairly long time before even beginning to make a bid for recognition. Intensely solemn, and inspired with a profound sadness, this work is more closely akin to the full-

throated lament of a great clan than to a weeping dirge; it mourns without whining, it grieves and grieves bitterly, but grimly and without tears. The composer has given no indication of whose memory inspired this work, but it is a fitting requiem for one who was himself a big-souled, big-hearted man, and whose life was indeed a tragedy.

'The score makes big demands upon the fullest resources of an up-to-date orchestra, including two harps and all the percussion instruments with the glockenspiel, and at several points it calls on the organ also for assistance. The instruments are used with a fine sense of their quality, and apparently experienced knowledge of their effect; the orchestration throughout is that of one who knows his materials and how to use them to the best advantage.'

III

Up to this time none of Brian's orchestral works had been printed, except the lithographed parts of the *First English Suite*. Kling, of Breitkopf and Härtel's, had 'bought' the Suite on some kind of basis that never yielded Brian any money, and issued a score and set of manuscript parts on hire. This was not the way Brian had hoped to see his work published: he had thought it would be printed and sold to anyone interested in it, as his choral works had been. He was unable to convince any publishers that the printing of orchestral parts could be made to pay. Perhaps the publishers were right in their views, but Brian felt that any orchestra having a work complete in its own library would be inclined more often to bring it out for performance than to consider one for which they would have to negotiate terms of hire for a short period. There was, besides, the peculiar case of the amateur orchestra that could only undertake to perform a modern work after a long period of rehearsals, in which case the cost of hiring parts might even come to more than the cost of purchasing a set of printed parts. It was useless to think that modern music could compete with the classics for programme space when the latter were available in print and the former only to be had on hire.

It has not always been so. There have been times in our history when music has been printed and distributed without hope of profit but only because the printers believed in the artistic value of the work they were doing. There has even been a time when one risked the rigour of the law by issuing forbidden music of artistic worth, for the Masses of William Byrd were printed and sent out to our cathedral choirs, in the time of Protestant Queen Elizabeth, interleaved with music such as the English Church sanctioned. But such instances are the fruits of artistic minds rather than of business minds.

It came as a surprise to Brian's patron that all his works had not been published. He agreed with Brian on the desirability of publication, and set about making inquiries regarding the cost.

He and Brian jointly received estimates from a selected list of famous publishers, and the choice lay finally between a British firm—Novello & Co.—and a German firm with a British agency—Breitkopf & Härtel. Mr. X was in favour of the British firm, but Brian favoured the Germans on the ground that they offered a wider field for publication and that the Continent offered far greater opportunities for orchestral performances than this country. Finally, Brian had his way, and Breitkopf & Härtel entered into a contract to print and publish all Brian's orchestral compositions on a profit-sharing basis.

There was more behind this than the sound business reasons by which Brian convinced Mr. X to favour the German firm. Brian had a great regard for Herr Kling,¹ and a growing admiration for the Germans as a nation. This was being reflected in his music, for after *In Memoriam* and *Doctor Merryheart* he set about a ballad for chorus and orchestra founded on Heine's *Die Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar*. There was as yet no conscious intention of leaving England and living in Germany, but the train of thought that had formed the basis of his 'Nuremberg' dream quoted on page 83 was taking on more conscious forms of expression. Brian's hope was that by publishing his works in Germany he would open up possibilities for their performance in a country with an operatic and orchestral tradition unknown in Britain. Of orchestral works he already had sufficient to offer for a start, and he was seeking a suitable libretto for an opera. Thomas Beecham suggested Ibsen's *Lady from the Sea*, Julius Walther suggested one on Maxim Gorki's *De Profundis*, and Arnold Bennett's arrangement of *Antony and Cleopatra* came to nothing, for reasons already stated. Brian placed his hopes in Germany because criticism of our opera houses (or lack of them) was a constant theme in the press of those days. Composers were in despair at the paucity of our operatic resources, but had not yet been driven to the almost complete indifference to this art that was to come in the course of thirty years; apparently they still had some hope that by soundly scolding the British public they could effect some measure of reform, for Ethel Smyth wrote:

'Whether the English public has a taste for opera I do not know. The food is too badly cooked, and those who are asked to eat it show no signs of appetite. There is not an audience abroad that has not a rough idea of whether a performance is good, bad or indifferent: one can say that as regards English opera the English public has not the faintest critical sense in this matter. One cannot even judge the points of a cricket or football match unless one happens to know the game, and I am afraid I do not see how—in London, at least—where people are always on the lookout for a new sensation, and where the same

¹ Kling was Swiss, but Brian seems not to have known this.

people who run to see *Elektra* would, as Mr. Beecham remarked, run with still more zeal to see an elephant standing on one foot at the top of the Nelson Column—a critical taste for opera is to be grown. For myself, I have declined two recent offers to produce *The Wreckers* in England, being perfectly certain that it is a waste of time and money. But on the other hand it will be produced at Vienna in the spring, and so certain am I of its being treated as a work of art should be treated—that is, for the time being absorbing all the energy which that Opera House commands to produce a performance as near perfect as possible—that I shall not even preside at the rehearsals. These people know better than I how to do the best by my work. Under present circumstances I cannot conceive of ever writing an opera in English again. I would rather “do time” than endeavour to get it properly produced. You cannot make bricks without straw.’

This is not inconsistent with Arnold Bennett’s view of the English middle classes, people without ideas, but full of opinions; people who regard themselves as leaders but who still retain a solid respect for the *status quo*. Bennett was at that time writing regularly for the *New Age*, and got Brian to send in an article on music. Brian’s subject was the neglect of British composers and an impassioned appeal for more interest in their works. Immediately on reading it Bennett wrote: ‘Don’t waste your time trying to put ideas into the mind of the Englishman—he doesn’t want them.’ So it went on.

It seemed then inevitable that any ideas put forward were sure to be powerfully opposed by the stolidity of believers in the *status quo*, even in music. It behoved the artist and the thinker to be ‘conscientiously immoral’ in the formulation of ideas unacceptable to the general public. Free thought was a virtue only among artists. Brian, in the days when he was a parish organist, had been the very quintessence of respectability; when he first called on Elgar at the Worcester Three Choirs Festival of 1905 he presented himself formally dressed in frock coat, pin-striped trousers, stiff collar and tall hat. He found Elgar dressed in loose tweeds, with a manner to match, and from that day Brian eschewed starch and toppers. His adverse criticism of Challinor’s *I Arise from Dreams of Thee* lost him the goodwill of many professed music-lovers, and branded him as one antagonistic to respectable effort, but as he had by that time a good selection of friends in artistic pursuits—Bennett, Bantock, Delius, Wood, Beecham, Elgar—he could dispense with the ‘friendship’ of anonymous letter-writers. His critical letter on Elgar’s First Symphony in 1909, however, cost him the friendship of Elgar, and this was a severe blow, but Elgar was affecting formality with the accumulation of honours, and deserting the companions of his early campaigning years.

‘Conscientiously immoral’, then, Brian feigned to be, and tongues

wagged. In North Staffordshire there remained only one man artistically in tune with him, a professional man with a true admiration for Brian's music and a passion for Elgar and Strauss above all other composers. He was an atheist; had he not been so his gods would undoubtedly have been Venus and Bacchus; he publicly (especially in philistine company) applauded the old German rhyme:

*Wer nicht liebt Wein, Weib, Gesang,
Der bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang.*

except that he loved other men's wives better than his own. He was a man who prided himself on his taste, especially in whisky, and for years he was a constant visitor at Brian's house. He and Mr. X were opposites. The latter continually hinted that his patronage might be withdrawn at any time, yet showed himself a man of his word on every obligation he had promised to undertake—even to the sum of £700 incurred in printing and publishing Brian's works. He saw Brian not as an evil man but as a mistaken man: 'You are too simple and trusting,' he once said, 'you have enemies everywhere.'

It was only too true. The devotee of Venus and Bacchus had put in some very hard work among the philistines. Brian's name was mud. Blissfully ignorant of this Brian tried to interest the President of the North Staffordshire District Choral Society in a performance of his music, and received from Twyford the enigmatic reply, 'I have made extensive inquiry, and am unable to find any one who is prepared to subsidize a performance of your music.' Brian was astounded—nothing had been further from his mind than a subsidy. When at last the position became clear to him he tried to recover his independence, considering favourably a position as assistant to Samuel Langford, music critic of the *Manchester Guardian*. Mr. X persuaded him against this, saying that his patronage would continue 'at least for some years'. Brian flirted with the idea of living abroad, or even in Birmingham, where he would be near his beloved Bantock, and Mr. X was not greatly opposed to these suggestions. He complained, however, that he was very disappointed in Brian's output of music since he had been in receipt of his money, and finally the blow fell. There was a quarrel, things were said that would have been better left unsaid, and Mr. X cut off his income. Faced with the necessity of earning a living by his music, Brian left Staffordshire for London, believing that among his friends there, one at least would help him to find suitable employment.

■

THE HUB OF SOCIETY

BRIAN had no doubt that he would be able to carry on his musical work in London free from the distractions and humiliations that had beset him in Staffordshire. He resolved to work as he had never done before in order to convince Mr. X and everybody else that he was no idler. He took cheap lodgings near Euston Station and planned his campaign to conquer the Metropolis, as many another provincial had done before him.

First he wrote to the music critics of all the principal papers, asking if they would devote some attention to his recently published scores. Should no replies be received within a week, he intended to visit them and try personal persuasion. Meanwhile he would write to the publishing houses asking for employment as a proof reader, or in any other capacity in which his musical ability would be useful. Finally he might try for a journalistic post, but this was only to be considered after all musical avenues had been explored.

His lodgings were appalling. He was awakened one night by a terrific fight going on in the room above; this was due, the landlady apologetically explained, to 'some theatricals being behind with their rent'. He saw life from an entirely new angle. As a boy he had seen poverty around him, but he himself had been spared the actuality of want through the foresight of his parents, and had early in life earned a respectable place in local society by reason of his association with the church. Here in London he felt the pangs of hunger and of cold, he was in the midst of an environment the like of which he had always known to exist but from which he had always so far been able to keep free. Never had life seemed so disgusting, yet it was not hopeless. Somewhere in his make-up lay that streak of puritanical frugality by which his parents had surmounted economical difficulties, but which he had for so long repressed. When he told Mr. X that he had always lacked respect for money it was because he had not known personally the full effect of economic distress, but at times his safe financial position actually brought a feeling of shame to him that was in its essence puritanical. 'Hardly had I moved to the house of Trentham', he wrote, 'than I was startled by hearing a concertina and fiddle outside my house one afternoon. There sure enough stood my old soldier-piano-pub-joiner enthusiast, vamping on a concertina to a squeaky fiddle. I had not seen him since I was a boy of fourteen or so, but he looked little altered.'¹ His jaws

¹ See p. 8
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were going as in years before—chewing. I was too hurt to show myself, but every Thursday afternoon his concertina could be heard in the village. When I say "hurt", I mean that I did not like to think I was so much better off than he was, so he never knew who was inside the house.'

It was not easy, this fight with Apollyon. The mental distress from which he suffered was intensified by this puritanical conversion. He blamed himself for his folly much as Bunyan blamed himself for dancing and bellringing, fearlessly declared his resolution to abstain from alcoholic drinks, wrote to Bantock on the eve of the production of *Vanity of Vanities*, wishing him success and a triumph for Harry Evans, and adding that he was going to toast them both in ginger pop that night.

Side by side with this moral fight, however, went the economic fight. Here Brian's weapons were poor and ill-impelled. Once he had been an organist, and again a 'cellist, but he had allowed his technical skill to lapse while the fever of composition was upon him. He was not proficient enough to earn his living as a performer, and having made no plans before coming to London he threw himself open to exploitation, because he could not hide his necessity. Others, he found, had played their cards much better.

'I've been on the go all day. I had lunch this morning with Cumberland and as I expected I found he came here with a fixed job on the *Daily Citizen* at £2 per week, a retainer on the *Manchester Courier*, and £50 in his pocket. If I had only the £50 to furnish a studio I shouldn't mind—the money is simply being swallowed up in one room (£40 per annum) and I've to take my bath outside.

'Cumberland seems to have done what is contrary to my hermit-like habits—mixed with everybody. I'm advised to join a club (where is the money?) and attend every concert (?) and rub shoulders with everyone and shout, "Damn you, give me a job". My Dear G.B., I shall do all I can and shall waste no moments; it will be difficult working at composition without a piano, although I never used mine much, but I'll write music now for *every* combination, as soon as I feel settled from the worries of uncertainties. I can work at this score when I've nothing else to do, but remember, I've two or three years to pull up; I'm naturally indolent and shall have to do as Scott of the South Pole did—whip myself into activity.

'I am asking "B. & H." to send copies of the songs and scores to all the critics of the London Press. After they have been out three days I intend to make appointments with the lot. Cumberland says they will all get frightened when they know I've come amongst them, as they are a hopelessly incompetent lot—I shall get nothing from them.

'I have also written Sir Hubert Parry and asked him to make an appointment. After yourself, *no* composer has expressed such sympathy

with my stuff as Vaughan Williams: I'm putting him on the warpath. But to do the thing at all well needs money—I mean, even to seek what I want—and I haven't got it!

'I will try Pitt, and see if I can get any work at C.G. I cannot think but that Bennett could do something in finding work for me to do in the theatre if he wished. I am told to-day I shall be lucky if I pick up anything inside six months, although there may be a number of things waiting unknown to me. To-morrow I'm having a day amongst music publishers.'

Gradually he got round to see the people he wanted to see, but the results were all disappointing. Only three critics replied to his letters, and their letters were all in agreement on one point—Brian's works had not been reviewed because Kling had sent out no copies to the press. Kling, Brian began to realize, was a gentleman and something of an artist, but not a first-rate business man.¹ —, however, suggested that he could best help Brian by talking over the problem with him, and talk they did:

'To-day has been mostly wasted in seeing L—— and ——. The former is generously disposed. (By the way, he said—"When I saw you before, you were sitting in the winter garden at the 'Midland', Manchester, alone, smoking; but you had a black beard and resembled Nikisch—where is the beard now?") But it was all talk. . . . How he met Von Bülow—Rubinstein—tales of Richter. This went flowing on without hesitation—save when he lit a cigarette. And then we were interrupted by a caller, I was introduced, and he resumed. He told funny tales, repeating one dropped by Arnold Bennett at the "Omar Khayyám" Club dinner. He ejaculated, "By jove, there are a lot of you provincial chaps coming up to London just now. Three have come to me with letters of introduction from Ernest Newman." I nearly killed myself with repressed laughter, at this procession of the "expecting" going to L—— as grand paterfamilias.

'Have heard nothing further from any of the London Press chaps beyond an invitation to tea at a club on Saturday next.

'Parry has not written.

'Vaughan Williams writes from Italy enclosing letters of introduction, but I've put them all on the fire, only keeping one directed to Gatty of the *Pall Mall*.

'—— show not a little cheek in their first transaction. Of course, I've hit myself one by having to go round seeking work and begging for it. They only offered three guineas for the two—a two-part setting of one of Herrick's children's lyrics and a unison setting of a Tennyson child's poem. For my setting of a whimsical part-song they offer four guineas. I told —— that I had never been paid less than five guineas and he must tell his uncle so. —— refuses "Kevlaar" and the Herrick part-songs as being "out of their line".

'I shall ask Kling to send all my recently published scores to Elgar. I shall then tell Elgar what I've done and who I've seen, and ask *him*

¹ Quite mistaken. Herr Kling was a very keen business man.

to get me some work at Novellos. I cannot believe but that there is something to be had in a big concern like theirs. Besides, I cannot go on like this, moving about all over the damned place, wasting time: if I'm to have a contented mind I must have a permanent job. I've just paid the landlady £1. — 9. and it pays for nothing else but the room, fuel and light for one week, and six breakfasts which she brings in the room each morning at 8.30. Sixpence a time for bread and butter! L—— said this morning I was out of it altogether, being here; why didn't I live in Chelsea?

'Do you know that the first few days I was up here after leaving you I walked down street after street trying to find a place where revolvers were to be bought? I couldn't find such a place and obviously I daren't ask. Last week when coming into Fleet Street from seeing Cumberland I passed a place where the window was simply lined with them, and you cannot imagine the awful sense of sickness or faintness which went through me at the sight of them. But I had only 10/- in my purse and the intense longing to possess simply turned to disgust because I had no money! I have entered upon a phase of insomnia; I never knew what it was until recently, and the struggle I have at nights to master a kind of mad tugging which goes on making such a wreck of the nerves—to get one and use it, is horrible. I suppose this is the hell the ancients passed through when they coined the word.'

Physical suffering was not the only cause for anxiety, however, for he was in grave doubt as to the effect this scramble for existence would have on his musical gifts, for only a fortnight later he wrote:

'—— have increased the price of the part-song, but not that of the other things. The sight of their cheque for eight guineas when money is wanted so badly makes one wonder whether musical prostitution really is a crime.

'Supposing this "easy go lucky" style to be my native style—then I ought to make money—but I am afraid of the fountain of this kind of poetry running dry. Fancy their refusing "Kevlaar" and the Herricks and taking rubbish! Up goes the apple cart of high art; there is no such thing; nobody wants it and nobody understands it. We must seduce a natural instinct for the high and noble and descend to the muck-heaps. . . . I wish hell would quake and thunder and smash the whole place to smithereens.'

Yet all was not so miserable. Sometimes even in a slight work he could find artistic satisfaction. Among the lyrics he set at this time was Herrick's charming *Grace for a Child*:

*Here a little child I stand
Heaving up my either hand;
Cold as paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to Thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat and on us all. Amen.*

'I can hear their small voices singing as I write,' he says. 'I'm sure I can keep up this style indefinitely.'

His reaction to all experiences was personal; he had never hesitated to help anyone towards the realization of artistic satisfaction, and he trusted everyone to do the same for him. He did not understand social and economic forces. The truth was that while he remained in Staffordshire he had been of service to composers and conductors, for he could introduce the former to a choir able to sing their works and the latter to lucrative engagements. Before he left Staffordshire he had done everything in his power to persuade local authorities to revive the North Staffordshire Triennial Festivals, and was at last meeting with some success. With the amalgamation of the six towns into the County Borough of Stoke-on-Trent in 1910, two of the towns—Burslem and Stoke—had money in hand which they used to build modern concert halls, hoping thereby to break down the tendency for music to be centralized at Hanley. The prime mover in the Stoke effort was Alderman Geen, who asked Brian's advice about the organization of a musical festival in Stoke. Brian advised Geen to put the whole affair in the hands of a famous London conductor, and this advice was followed. A complete schedule was drawn up, with full details of expenses, and at the bottom of each day's events came the figure: conductor's fee, eighty guineas. Geen asked Brian if this figure was right, and Brian assured him that this was the usual fee that conductor got. Yet when this conductor knew that Brian was in London seeking work he did nothing—indeed, Brian was mystified by a letter from the great man's wife saying: 'My husband and I are glad to know that you are doing so well.' Possibly he saw in Brian's flight to London the end of all prospect of an engagement, but in this he was mistaken. Alderman Geen became Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent, and had every intention of forcing the issue for a revival in Stoke of the Triennial Festivals, but death suddenly took him while presiding at a council meeting, and with Geen went Brian's hope of a Stoke performance of one of his later works.

None of the people in London from whom he had expected assistance was prepared to give it. Kling was friendly enough, but had no work to offer. Elgar did not reply to Brian's letter, but the results suggested that he disapproved, as a master should of a strayed disciple, for Novellos turned down *Kevlaar* and several part-songs that Brian offered, and had no employment to offer on their staff.

A minor official at the Royal College of Music tried to 'draw' Brian with a witty remark about Beethoven, but Brian kept his tongue in check. 'Judging from the applause,' he had written only the day before, 'Beethoven and his pom-poms are as popular

as ever.' Sir Alexander Mackenzie wrote kindly from the Royal Academy of Music: 'Unfortunately we have nothing to offer you. If anything should appear in the near future, I could hold out little hope for you, as our own people come first.' Another music publisher said in reply to Brian's request for work as a proof-reader, 'You are too good for that work', and accepted a fair number of Brian's compositions for publication, paying better prices than —, but little enough when they had to keep the wolf from the door. For a children's operetta commissioned by this firm Brian received £15, and Cumberland received £10 for the libretto (for which he kept Brian waiting week after week, well knowing that Brian was in desperate need of the lyrics in order to complete his part of the work and receive payment).

As time went on even these sources of income faded away, for publishers' lists soon included all the small compositions of Brian that they were likely to want for some time. From polite refusal the controllers of musical policy turned to evasion and then to embarrassed avoidance of Brian. One would think he had come to London to beg money from them instead of to find work. Brian got to expect this treatment in places where musicians gathered, and even showed his contempt for it. Sitting one day in the front row of the gallery in Covent Garden Opera House, he saw a leading musical celebrity occupying a box with some ladies. The great one sat with his back to the stage, where he could see the audience and they could best see him. Brian gazed at him until their eyes met. The celebrity appeared not to recognize Brian, but a minute later changed places with one of the ladies so that he had his back to the audience.

All this bravado was of no avail, however, against the obvious fact that Brian was not wanted in London. He was, he told himself, a Jonah, and would save himself eventual disgrace by a tactful withdrawal from the world. Desperation had driven him to acceptance of a theory that to die would save him the agony of an existence that was destined to become less than human. Brian went down Fleet Street, found the fire-arm shop, saw as he had seen once before the rows of weapons in the shop window, and gripped the shop-door handle.

The shop was shut.

Even in his determination to end life he had been frustrated. Could failure go further than this? He wandered away from the shop—where, he never exactly remembered. He had a vague recollection of being hustled by the crowd in a large market-hall, and of making a purchase. It was late when he arrived home. He had gone out to buy a revolver; he returned with a trussed chicken.

REACTION TO THE WAR

THE Musical League had a difficult time after its first festival at Liverpool in 1909. It had been proposed to hold the next meeting in the Potteries, but the project fell through. There was one more festival, but not until 1913, and this took place under the combined auspices of the Musical League and the Incorporated Society of Musicians: *Doctor Merryheart* had its first performance there under the baton of Julius Harrison. It was Brian's last triumph. Henry J. Wood played it at a Promenade Concert later in the year, but it had the usual passing acclamation, the negligible value of which became evident to Brian when he found himself shortly afterwards thrown on to the mercy of London musical society. Within a year of Wood's performance of *Merryheart* he had been disillusioned, and was ready to turn to any form of activity that would react against the experiences of his stay in London, and at the same time offer opportunities for the completion of the moral conversion on which he had determined.

The outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 decided his course of action. Brian was a romanticist, with all the admiration for heroism that characterized the early nineteenth-century romantic writers. His conception of the character of Napoleon—whose life and character he had long studied—was that of Beethoven when he wrote the *Eroica Symphony*, changing as Beethoven's did when the fire of the young Napoleon gave way to avarice in the moment of success. Brian believed that by self-abasement under military discipline and devotion to a patriotic cause he would purify his soul. It did not work out as he had expected; nothing could have been more uncongenial to one of Brian's temperament than a life of rigid routine controlled by officers who, like the rest of Kitchener's Army, were men from civilian life having to learn the trade of a soldier. Brian was discharged nine months later with a smashed hand, but had he continued in what he called 'Fred Karno's Guards' for the whole duration of the war, he would have remained a poor soldier.

He got leave from his commanding officer to visit Bournemouth in order to conduct his *First English Suite*, and a chance meeting with Beecham in Regent Street on another occasion resulted in the latter producing the *Festal Dance*. More important, however, is the fact that this meeting with Beecham set the old fires burning again. The decision to write an opera, so long delayed on account of the difficulty of finding a suitable libretto, was at last to be put into practice with Brian himself writing both words

and music. His subject was not to be anything like those that had previously been suggested to him (*Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Lady from the Sea*, or Gorki's *De Profundis*); this was to be a comic opera, with a cast like Fred Karno's Guards, and a special thought for the frailties of a Covent Garden audience.¹ As for the plot of *The Tigers*, there is no plot as that word is understood in operatic circles, where even the thinnest themes have some semblance of continuity. *The Tigers* is a satire on an imaginary form of society totally insincere. Nobody does anything he proposes to do, every situation is muddled and Brian's shafts of satire are rendered sufficiently impersonal to be acceptable to a conventional audience by making all the characters 'stagey'. There is a stage colonel, Sir John Stout, a middle-aged stage flirt, Mrs. Pamela Freebody, a stage sergeant-major, stage clergymen, policemen, costermongers, soldiers, firemen, labourers, capitalists, and haymakers, all of whom air artificial opinions at variance with the facts, and behave in an astonishingly irresponsible way in the face of any suspicion of a serious situation. All are moral cowards, and unashamed, praising each other's courage and ability, and as scene after scene threatens to become dramatic but dissolves into comedy, they invent artificial platitudes to justify their failures.

This type of plot came into English literature for the first time during the Great War, and has seen some notable development since in the hands of original writers like Virginia Woolf and W. H. Auden. *Jacob's Room* plays about with previously unconsidered trifles and *The Ascent of F.6* is cast for characters apparently common but at the same time symbolic; by means of these the authors attempt to portray psychological forces in a more detached manner than would be possible in the type of novel or play in vogue before the war. Brian's operatic libretto cannot stand with the works of these later writers as literature (nor, for that matter, could any other operatic plot), but it is of interest to those who would seek to understand the psychological reason for this development in literature that Brian's environment during the war years cut him off from contact with modern developments in artistic thought, and his line of progress therefore was taken as a result of personal reactions to the peculiar ideas that found acceptance with the public at that time.

The beginning of this is seen in his letters from the army. He joined the forces in order to purify his soul—within nine months he had left it, a rebel.

His first job after demobilization was as a clerk in the Records Office of the Canadian Forces. Being a military establishment the

¹ The climax of the Prologue is an impressive set of variations on the popular song, 'Has anybody here seen Kelly?'

office was under orders in the same way as an army unit would be. The work took him right to the heart of the vast organization of an army corps. In the office were files giving particulars of every man in the Canadian army overseas—their parentage, ancestry, profession and military record. To these files Brian had constantly to refer, and almost all told the same story. The men were all volunteers who had come overseas to help in a fight that they could have avoided had they wished, but as Brian read their records he understood their motives: with monotonous regularity the records showed that they had close relations with the Mother Country—they or their parents were English, Scottish, Irish or Welsh, and to them Great Britain was as much home as the new country across the Atlantic. They came, many of them, from a spirit of adventure, and all from a love of the Motherland. This was something the enemy could not possibly have calculated, and in it lay our assurance of ultimate victory. They were a fine people.

Brian's work was to enter casualties in the files. Information came from the men's pay books, carried in their tunic pockets throughout their service, with particulars of rank, promotions, pay, and on the back page each man's will. Most of the books came in covered with blood. Letters found on the men were sent along with their pay books, and from them he learned of the barbarism that was the reality of this glorious game of war. The Germans had a hatred of British Dominion and Colonial troops, greater apparently than their hatred of the English, and this was reciprocated. In the midst of this Brian saw how the Canadians changed psychologically. They were disillusioned. Sometimes a touch of humour would come in, as when Brian read on the back page of a pay book: 'I leave all I have—my wife and kids—to the chap that kills me.' But it was all forced.

This experience was common enough among the men engaged in the fighting on both sides, but it was something new to the British, who had never before been engaged in a war that drew such a number of men from civilian life into the forces for the duration of a war. Previous wars had been fought by small professional armies. The public's impression of war had up to that time been consistent with the romantic conception of heroism: it had been the source of much lofty art, and the romantic tradition continued to flower throughout 1914-15 in such poems as Rupert Brooke's *The Soldier* and Laurence Binyon's *For the Fallen*. By the end of the war, however, the mood had changed to one that made possible Siegfried Sassoon's *Blighters* and *Base Details*, poems transitory but true. In music the Boer War had resounded to Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* marches, but the most important musical revelation of the Great War was *Mars* from *The*

Planets Suite of Holst; a mechanical travesty of all the supposed virtues of bellicosity.¹ Brian's *In Memoriam* tone-poem was in the pre-war tradition, and not acceptable to a new age experienced in bloodshed and barbarity.

Brian's reaction to the war was coloured, moreover, by previously formed opinions on military practice. In his youth he had been stirred by reading of the campaigns of Marlborough; later he fell under the spell of Napoleon's career, and read everything he could find about him, from Bourrienne's *Memoirs* to Lord Rosebery's *The Last Phase*. He had a great admiration, too, for G. W. Steevens, a military correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, whose dispatches from the battle of Atbara and from Germany during the manœuvres of the Imperial Army under Kaiser William II he considered to be amongst the most vivid things written in modern journalism. It was on the basis of his reading in these subjects that his mind revolted against the muddle he saw while serving in the British Army. The climax came when his Christmas leave was arbitrarily stopped by an irate sergeant-major, although it had appeared officially in orders. Brian resigned his post and wrote to the Brigadier telling him that when he was in the army orders had been orders, and no sergeant-major had the right to question them. Disciplinary action was in due course taken against the sergeant-major, but by that time Brian had left London and taken a clerkship with an important armaments firm in Birmingham.

In this environment he wrote his opera: yet there were compensations. In Birmingham there were fewer air-raids than in London, and Bantock was near at hand. Each week—and sometimes oftener—Brian would have tea with Bantock at the Midland Institute, and they would talk of music and the progress of *The Tigers*. The opera grew in importance as it passed into Acts II and III with much effective writing for the chorus and orchestra, and a fine sense of stage effect. This opera was new in that it broke away from the lyric plus dramatic form that had been a feature of operas from Monteverdi to Wagner. Brian's libretto is in dramatic prose, and instead of a series of arias interspersed with recitative, with or without the additional elucidation (or complication) of *leit motif*, it uses groups of the chorus as a means of developing the ideas of the plot, for the plot is not so much a story of events as a means of unfolding ideas about *The Tigers*. There are many impressive stage pictures, and the opera would be expensive to produce by reason of the large cast required, but it never loses sight of the fact that an opera must have dramatic flow in the unfolding of a theme. Brian's theme is a social parody; the characters are not in themselves

¹ Written before the war, but first performed in 1918.

important, and not one of them is what a popular playwright would call 'sympathetic'. Shaw had long been writing plays with emphasis on ideas rather than on stage action; Brian differs from Shaw in that most of his vehicles of ideas are cross-sections of the community instead of single individuals.

The opera was ten years reaching that stage of completion when its pencilled pages could finally be inked in. By that time opera in England had suffered many reverses, including the collapse of the Beecham Opera Company, on which Brian's main hope of a performance had rested. *The Tigers* stands in a class by itself, but has had no influence on the course of British opera because it has never been performed. The vocal score, however, is published. It marks an important stage in Brian's psychological development: a necessary stage, when disillusion and dissatisfaction with society brought a desire for ridicule. It is characteristic of the Romantic movement that it started out to express the satisfaction of noble human aspirations; there was an intermittent period of revolt against the disinclination of society to accept noble aspirations as practicable, and a final stage where the ideal is so remote from life as to be a purely æsthetical conception. Brian reached the middle period during the war years, and his satire was directed against the absurdities of a diseased state of society; but it would have come, anyway, as a result of his experiences in London before the war broke out. The current of his psychological flow did not alter its direction during the war years—it is in evidence in his dreams: the persistence of an idea that his pride had poisoned his soul in the past, and that in repentance he should await retribution. The following letter to Bantock belongs to the later war years:

'You entered into my dreams this afternoon. Whether it is the medicine or the 'flu I don't know, but I am half asleep and it is always the same when I have had a bad dose of it. But I was at your place at Broadmeadow: from the way I walked about I seemed to own it. I was going up a wide staircase and met the Colonel¹ coming down in his dressing gown, hair standing straight. I was frightened by his looks. As he passed me he hissed: "I'm going to have a seesaw on the viola." I noted the time. An hour afterwards I met you and asked, "Where's the bathroom?" You pointed to the door and I found it locked. You said: "Kick it." I did, and the door slowly opened and the Colonel passed out just as before, in dressing gown and straight hair. I noticed there was a lot of water on the floor. Also there were three large taps. The middle one seemed to have been in use most, so I put my mouth to it and turned on the tap, the water rushing down my throat. The thirst being less I turned off the tap. Looking round I saw you standing

¹ Nickname for H. Orsmond Anderton, Bantock's biographer. A quiet and rather dignified man. Not a colonel.

with Kintock¹ as he was eight or nine years ago at Broadmeadow. You said, "Brian, what a blasted mess you've made, have you been washing the floor?" At the same time you picked up a large bath towel as big as a carpet. Water dripped from it and you rolled it up and with some effort you pitched it through the window. I said, "I've not made the blasted mess: the Colonel must have done it. An hour ago I met him on the stairs and he said he was going to have a seesaw on the viola. Just now he came out, looking just the same." You replied, "Ah—that is what he does when he seesaws on the viola, he goes into the bath and uses the water so violently that he drowns the floor." Then I complained of feeling faint. I told you what I had done; that I had been drinking water with my mouth to the tap, and the middle tap. You shouted: "Why, that's the house water!" I shouted: "O Christ! What makes me feel drunk?" You said: "It may be the pitch from the roof or the poison from the leaves in the water." I then turned on the middle tap, and feathers and leaves flew out. I turned sick as I thought of the rubbish in my stomach. You grew alarmed and went on the roof. Coming down, you said to me seriously, "It's a dead peacock." You armed me down the stairs and we passed the Colonel just outside his door—still in his dressing gown and straight hair, addressing an imaginary crowd. He heeded us not but went on addressing the unseen, his hands and arms going, and emphasizing:

*"I knew he was sold to the devil.
He must be his brother or his heir.
Drunk on this and drunk on that—
He was always drunk.
Now he is drunk on a dead peacock."*

And he repeated the word many times, as though caressing it: "Peacock! Peacock! Peacock!"

'Then I awoke. Through the window I saw a sparrow pinching my seeds.'

¹ Kintoki—family nickname for Bantock's third son.

BIRTH OF A SYMPHONY

IT was with an intense feeling of relief that Brian welcomed the end of the war in 1918. The score of *The Tigers* was not completed, but the general scheme had been sketched out, and the final touches were only a matter of time. His war work in Birmingham came to an end, also greatly to his relief, for he was by temperament incapable for long of tolerating mechanical devices.

London had treated him with indifference before the war, but there had been compensations. He had memories of exciting nights in the gallery of Drury Lane Theatre when the Beecham Opera Company was at its best: *Boris Godounoff* with Chaliapin, Stravinsky's *Le Rossignol*, and an unforgettable performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* under Beecham, who also gave practical effect to his belief in British opera by producing Holbrooke's *Dylan*. He had been present, too, at the first performance of Zandonai's *Paola and Francesca*, and an admirable performance of *Die Meistersinger* under Nikisch, with Paul Knupfner as Hans Sachs. The same singer he had also heard as the father in Charpentier's *Louise*. Little did he think that such music would change the course of British taste. He understood well enough our weakness for copying the fashions of the Continent, but he underestimated the force of propaganda that drew attention to the music of our gallant allies, France and Russia.

It is one of the least commendable virtues of music that it increases in popularity in times of national despondency, together with such forms of escape from reality as the popular film and the consumption of alcohol. Such an increase in popularity, however, takes place in well-known classical and romantic music—not in music that calls for much reciprocal effort from the hearer. To the composer war is repressive. Minds must don a national uniform; thought is allowed to flow only along channels regarded as expedient by those in charge of the all-essential business of convincing an enemy through force; the press must be censored; Parliament must not be divided in opinion; in fact, so many restrictions thwart the expression of truth that to an original mind the world becomes a gigantic entangled phantasmagoria that blurs and stupifies the creative faculties. Suddenly, by the stroke of a pen, comes an official pronouncement of peace, and all thoughts are turned towards letting loose the flood of ideas that has for so long been dammed by the 'national effort'.

Besides *The Tigers*, Brian had composed a series of songs to words by Temple Keble: *When the Sun goes Down, On Parting*,

Love is a Merry Game, *Renunciation* and *Lady Ellayne*. Three of these were taken up and sung by Lia Rosa, while *Love is a Merry Game* was sung by John Coates. All were published by Enoch & Sons. But the poet who influenced Brian most at this time was Blake, thirteen of whose songs Brian set to music during the war years, and whose *Book of Thel* the composer had in mind to set to music as soon as *The Tigers* should be satisfactorily completed. The *Book of Thel*, however, was slow in germination and never became sufficiently developed to force its would-be creator to give it material shape.

Two of the Blake songs, however, deserve mention: *The Land of Dreams* and *The Birds*. Both are typical of Blake in all his simplicity, but there is about the former a certain quality of escapism—ugly word—easy enough to understand in the circumstances of Blake's life, but frowned upon by present-day critics.

Awake, awake, my little Boy!
Thou wast thy Mother's only joy;
Why dost thou weep in thy gentle sleep?
Awake! thy Father does thee keep.

O, what a Land is the Land of Dreams?
What are its Mountains, and what are its Streams?
O Father! I saw my Mother there,
Among the Lilies by waters fair.

Among the lambs, clothed in white,
She walked with her Thomas in sweet delight.
I wept for joy, like a dove I mourn,
Oh! when shall I again return!

Dear Child, I also by pleasant streams
Have wandered all Night in the Land of Dreams;
But tho' calm and warm the waters wide,
I could not get to the other side.

Father, O Father! what do we here
In the Land of unbelief and fear?
The Land of Dreams is better far,
Above the light of the Morning Star.

There is a complexity about Brian's pianoforte accompaniment that detracts somewhat from the simplicity of Blake's lines. A review in the *Monthly Musical Record* said: 'The composer's style is not easy, while not really far-fetched. It is music of substance, harmonically rather stern, lacking the naïveté of Blake's verses, but of a fine seriousness. The singer and pianist who master these two distinguished pieces will feel they have not worked in vain.'

These two songs, *The Birds* and *The Land of Dreams*, were

published by Augener, on whose advice Brian agreed to remodel the accompaniments as solo pianoforte pieces and add two more, publishing them under the title of *Four Impressions*. Dr. Eaglefield Hull, in his *Dictionary of Modern Music and Musicians*, sees in them some of the features used by the Expressionists, but Brian cannot agree on this point. Certainly he has never been attracted to the work of Schönberg and his followers.

The other work for pianoforte published about this time is the *Three Illuminations* (written in 1917). These short pieces of programme music are frankly pot-boilers; issued under one cover with an attractive design in bright colours depicting three tall candles with a butterfly hovering above the middle one, they are not in themselves of great interest, but they are useful as an example of the irresponsibility of some musicians when they take to criticism, for in 1925 Joseph Holbrooke produced a book on *Contemporary British Composers*, containing a chapter on Havergal Brian, in the course of which he said of the *Three Illuminations*: 'The whole gamut of the obscene and freakish, the ludicrous and the idiopathic, had to be encountered. And humour of the abnormal kind was there. Screaming with laughter we lay on our backs on our benches with these ditties of the most strange and individual musician of our time.'

Of the three candles he wrote: 'A truly horrific cover by Alvin Langdon Coburn.'

The year 1919 saw a list of vocal works as long as that of 1913, for with the return of normal conditions Brian again gave himself up wholeheartedly to composition. He left Birmingham immediately the war ended, and sought a place where he could give himself up to composition in a quiet and beautiful atmosphere. He found it in Lewes. Here was the place of his 'Nuremberg' dream—the lazy river, the splendid church, the house with the wide staircase in which he had seen the vision of Beethoven. Here, he found, music came to him with a never-ending flow, for besides the songs and short choral works of this year he composed his *Third English Suite*, which had its first performance in 1922 at Bournemouth. It is a tribute to the beauty of the South Downs, in four movements, with the following titles: 1. Kingston Church. 2. Gallop. (Reminiscent of the racehorses he saw in training each day along the top of the Downs.) 3. The Stone Breaker. (Now an obsolete trade.) 4. Epithalamion.

In the same year, 1919, he commenced to write his Symphony in D minor, called *The Gothic*, and with it he arrived at full maturity in his art. From this time onwards there is no thought of material limitations, no leg-pulling, no satire. The compositions of the post-war years, starting with the *Gothic Symphony*, are conceived on an epic scale, heroic in their character and intricate

in their texture; masterpieces of contrapuntal and orchestral resource. None of them has been performed; none of them—except perhaps the *Gothic Symphony*—was written with an idea that the public would be likely to know them. They came and were set down because the impulse to do so could not be resisted; they involved long periods of intense concentration, much fatigue, and no possibility of reward, either in money or appreciation. The *Gothic Symphony* alone took eight years to complete, although the sketches for the whole work—including the choral finale—were all on paper in 1922. How far it is related to the philosophy of Blake's poem *The Land of Dreams* is a moot point, but the circumstances under which it was written point to its being a compensation to Brian for all the hardship and neglect he was doomed to suffer in a world of changing values.

All the problems of his pre-war stay in London were facing him again in the post-war age. He knew that it would be impossible to keep himself and his family on the meagre income he derived from the sale of copyright in his shorter pieces. From his larger works he could expect nothing. He therefore asked several publishers to send him any hack-work they had, and on the proceeds of this work he hoped to earn sufficient to keep the wolf from the door. Mr. X continued to send him £6 a month until his death in 1922, when this allowance stopped; from that time Brian became completely dependent on hack-work, writing out band parts and arrangements for small bands, 'double-cued' so as to be possible on alternative combinations of instruments. He had always loathed copying out band parts, even when they were his own, and the works he now had to copy were rarely of any musical interest. When they were—irony of ironies—they were unprofitable, for a well-scored work took longer to copy than one padded out with conventional figures, and the copyist is paid so much per page for his work. Something else happened—work became scarce after 1922 and the wolf scratched more ominously than ever at the door. The Brians left Lewes, and, after a short time in Brighton, moved to a new house in Moulsecombe, at the foot of the Downs. Rent was cheaper, and the surroundings a greater incentive to composition than any other district in which Brian had lived. Here, in the periods between spells of hack-work, inspiration came to him in a never-failing flow. Far into the night he would work at his huge score of the *Gothic Symphony* by the light of a shaded table-lamp (a trick he had learnt when the Zeppelin raids harried him at West Dulwich in 1915), until exhaustion overcame him and he fell asleep. Yet he would be up in the morning at 8 o'clock, striding over the Downs with his Irish terrier, Pete.

'The composition of the *Gothic Symphony* presented no problems beyond the usual vexatious one of the finale—should it be instrumental

or choral? As the first part (orchestral) was largely coloured by *Goethe's Faust, Part II*, I had an idea of setting to a choral finale a large portion of the last act of *Faust, Part II*. But the *Te Deum* had never been out of my mind as a work to be done. As it pushed itself forward as the only possible finale for a *Gothic Symphony*, I got to work at it quickly, and it was written as stated. A rainy night or a howling wind with rain driving on the panes is an inspiration. I always work with a green-shaded table-lamp; in the days of working on the *Gothic* the shade was extra thick, so that the rest of the room away from my table was in darkness. If in those midnight hours I sometimes saw Frederick the Great, a shrunken figure at the end of a long life of fighting, John Sebastian Bach, Goethe or Berlioz sitting in an armchair in the darkness by the fire, I attached no importance to the phenomenon. . . . Such happenings must drive others off their mental balance. I have always felt that I, being the only person interested in my work, would discover a solution to all the mysteries about it.'

Such a solution is not, however, possible to the one who experiences the phenomena, for they are images from the unconscious mind rendered more vivid by the effects of physical fatigue, and possibly also by malnutrition, for it must be confessed that there were times at Moulsecoombe when Brian saw more dinner-times than dinners. He worked on the *Gothic Symphony* when there was no hack-work available—which means that he was 'unemployed' at the time. The picture of the composer of music on the verge of starvation has been one of the commonplaces of the Romantic movement from its inception—Mozart—Beethoven—Schubert—Berlioz—Wagner—indeed, it forms the main attraction of the popular biographies, but it speaks badly for modern society that after so much publicity there should as yet be no attempt to alleviate the hardship that still dogs the heels of a talented man endeavouring to earn his living by honest work in music. The circumstances in which Brian found himself are fully in keeping with the economic tradition of the Romantic Movement:

'March 8th, 1924.

'I heard from your friend Miss Andrews to-day. As there is a principle involved I mention it. I am no use at music copying other than score copying. The latter needs a composer for good work. Also, at score copying the price does not allow of margins, unless the scoring happens to be light-fingered and decently laid out. Even then the next score may be just as "thick", so what you gain on the hosses you lose on the swings.

'For drawing orchestral parts from a score the trade price, I understand, is 8*d.* or 9*d.* per page, and 7*d.* for duplicating. I have been paid 7*d.* for duplicating, but with only one firm, and it was this firm that gave me trade prices and what they paid.

'Now when I asked H—for some work, he stipulated that I was to draw string parts from his opera score for 6*d.* per page. This would

Meinem geliebten Freund und Meister DR RICHARD STRAUSS gewidmet

THE GOTHIC

Symphony No. 2

Part I

Havergal Brian

Allegro assai (Quick free and bright)

2 Flutes
3rd Flute (Picc)
Bass Flute
(1st Fl. Picc.)
2 Oboes
Oboe d'Amore
Cor Anglais
Bass Oboe
E♭ Clarinet
2 Clarinets in B♭
Corno di Bassetto
Bass Clarinet
3 Fagotti
Contra Fagott
Horns in F
Trumpets in F
Tenor Trombones
Tubas
5 Tympani
3 Tympani
Percussion
Celeste
Harp I
Harp II
Organ
Violin I
Violin II
Violas
Cellos
Basses

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Edition Cranz, Bruxelles, London, Leipzig

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be low enough if the score were a decent one. As it is, I cannot get salt out of it. I made £2 11s. in ten days and to make matters worse he has put the payment, etc., of this work in the hands of Goodwin and Tabb, who will query my working at such a low figure and expect me to do any other work at the same low rate.

'You understand why I must get out of this hideous form of slavery. I have to work day and night at a score like H——'s to get even shillings out of it.

'I wanted a little job doing in my garden yesterday and I asked a young chap to do it: he said he couldn't, but his mate would. I said: "What would your mate want?"—and he replied, "A shilling an hour."

'So I talked to him, and said I couldn't afford such a price; I would do it myself, and he calmly said, "Well, mister, you'll get no casual men to work for less."

'I cannot make a shilling an hour at music copying unless it is score copying, and as I have not hitherto done any copying such as Miss Andrews describes I have quoted her a price of 1/- per page, or a lump sum which works out at that rate.'

Is it to be wondered at that under these conditions the composer runs amok and curses the whole of society? Even the most dilettante dipper into musical history knows that Brian's is not an isolated case. Is it to be wondered at that the composer shuns realities, digs deeper and deeper into his dream-life for an environment in which he can believe? Is it to be wondered at that Brian turned to the works of the early romantic writers—in particular to Goethe and Shelley—for inspiration, and expressed them in a medium unlikely to be heard by his own generation?—an orchestra so tremendous that few concert halls could house it, and few purses afford it, and in a musical idiom driving deep into the past—before the grip of commerce had begun to strangle the arts:

'I quite agree that the small orchestra and quartet are interesting, but they cannot (for me) express the big things of life. The quartet least of all. I don't think I have a "kink" for it. . . . As regards this Symphony—I wonder how many people have helped in the making of it. Structurally it belongs more to Palestrina and our own William Byrd—well, quite as much as the *Tristan Prelude* is a development of a germ or an idea as are the Palestrina and Byrd works. But I cannot express myself on a less scale. This work has no programme, but the next will have a programme. . . .

'As regards performances. Well, it is better to go on working in silence and obscurity and get works written, rather than seek the glare of the footlights and have illusions destroyed. Bach never troubled whether his works would be performed: he merely wrote them and lived to write them.'

So the *Gothic Symphony* drew to a close in a great setting of the *Te Deum* for double chorus and a choir of boys' voices, an orchestra of Straussian dimensions to which was added a number

of ancient instruments now practically obsolete, and four brass bands, after the example of Berlioz's scoring of the *Requiem*. And with it drew to a close the inevitable stranglehold of ways and means of living. The wolf could no longer be kept from the door. Brian sold his pianoforte and applied for assistance to the British Musicians' Pension Society—a charitable institution. The secretary's reply is most interesting:

‘July 28th, 1925.

‘DEAR MR. BRIAN,

‘Your letter to hand for which I thank you. I am delighted to be able to let you know where there is some work for you to do. Mr. — H — says that he can give you plenty to copy some of his music at 6*d.* per page. His address is . . . Under these circumstances you will not want me to put your letter before my committee.

‘Trusting this will be the preliminary to better things.

‘I am,

‘Yours faithfully,

‘LEONARD W. PINCHES, Hon. Sec.

‘P.S.—Let us know how you get on.’

ADVENTURES OF THE *GOTHIC SYMPHONY*

HELP came from an unexpected quarter. It happened that during their residence in Lewes the Brians had befriended the wife of an army officer. When this man heard that Brian was in need of employment in 1925 he obtained a post for him in the Inland Revenue Department, and from that time Brian's financial position was easier. Brian had no love of government offices, however, so when a music publishing house offered him a job as copyist at a regular wage of £5 a week he gave up the civil service job, which paid less, and again, when he had the opportunity of becoming assistant editor to *Musical Opinion*, he left the copying to take on the more congenial work of musical journalism. In the offices of *Musical Opinion* he remained happily until the Second World War disorganized once again the artistic life of the country.

Brian's literary work has a value different from his musical composition. The latter came to him in forms that would not take into account the needs of the public, but in the former he is distinguished by his skill as an interpreter—he has the ability to see the point of view of his reader and present his subject in a way that interests most. Brian's articles in *Musical Opinion*, *The Chesterian* or *The British Bandsman* are all different in style, interpreting the subject he is unfolding in the particular way best suited to the different types of reader these journals approach.

Composition went on as ardently as ever in his spare time. The *Gothic Symphony* and *The Tigers* were both completed to the last down beat, and another work contemplated, when an opportunity arrived for presenting the symphony for expert criticism. In conjunction with the Schubert Centenary Celebrations that were to take place in Vienna in 1928 a competition was arranged by the Columbia Graphophone Company for composers in all countries. They had the option of completing the *Unfinished Symphony* or submitting an original orchestral work. Brian sent in his *Gothic Symphony*; it was awarded the second prize of £50 for those received from British composers,¹ and the score sent on to Vienna for the judge's decision at the final contest for the world prize of £2,000. The judges of the British works had been Sir Walford Davies, Sir Hugh P. Allen, Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Sir Donald Tovey, and of these the last was chosen to represent Britain on the board of judges meeting in Vienna. Brian met

¹ The First Prize of £150 was divided between Mr. Frank Merrick for two movements to complete the *Unfinished Symphony*, and Mr. St. J. A. Johnson for a slow movement, 'Pax Vobiscum', in memory of Schubert.

Sir Donald only once, when they discussed the *Gothic Symphony*. Brian was impressed by Tovey's skill at the keyboard—he played through the first three movements of the *Gothic Symphony* from the score, correct in all essentials. It was one of the greatest moments of his life to hear it played thus and to know that the player regarded it as one of the greatest symphonies of the post-war period.

At Vienna the *Gothic Symphony* came in for stricter judgment. The terms of the competition said 'an orchestral work', in consequence of which the finale of the *Gothic Symphony* was ruled out because it included voices. The first three movements however form a complete work, and it was possible to base a judgment on them as a whole. No details were published of the findings of the Vienna committee except the name of the prize winner—a Swedish composer named Atterberg.¹ Word came to Brian by hearsay that his *Gothic Symphony* only just missed the prize; that the committee spent a whole day deciding whether Brian or Atterberg should be awarded the £2,000 prize. If that is so, it seems unfortunate that nothing appeared in the press about it, as it would have been of great assistance to Brian in his efforts to obtain a performance of the work.

Indeed, misfortune dogged the symphony from that time. It was a condition of the competition that all works became the property of the Columbia Graphophone Co., but when the *Gothic Symphony* was not performed or recorded by that company (as the other two prize-winning works of the British section were) Brian asked if his symphony might be returned to him. Louis Stirling replied, cordially agreeing to do so, and consequently Brian again obtained possession of his score. Sir Henry Wood saw the score, but would not undertake a performance because of the expense of engaging so many extra players: the first three movements are scored for 4 flutes, 2 oboes, oboe d'amore, cor anglais, bass oboe, E flat clarinet, 2 B flat clarinets, corno di bassetto, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contra-bassoon, 6 horns, E flat cornet, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, 2 tubas, tympani, cymbals, side drum, bass drum, celeste, 2 harps, organ and strings. Such an orchestra, though large, is not beyond Wagnerian dimensions. The fourth movement, however, is paralleled only by Berlioz in his famous *Requiem*. Brian's scoring is for eighty-two strings, 2 piccolos, 4 flutes, bass flute, 4 oboes, 2 cors anglais, oboe d'amore, bass oboe, 2 E flat and 3 B flat clarinets, 2 corni di bassetti, 2 bass clarinets, pedal clarinet, 3 bassoons, 2 contra bassoons, 8 horns, 4 E flat cornets, 5 trumpets, bass trumpet, 3 tenor trombones, bass trombone, contra-bass trombone, 2 euphoniums, 2 bass tubas,

¹ Conductor of the Stockholm Orchestra. His winning composition was a Symphony in C.

4 tympani, 2 harps, organ, glockenspiel, xylophone, long drum, 2 bass drums, side drum, tambourine, cymbals, gong, thunder machine, tubular bells, chimes, chains and bird-scare.

In addition to this, a double chorus, a choir of boys' voices, and four brass bands each composed of trumpets, horns, trombones, tuba and tympani, are required. All for a setting of the *Te Deum*. The score bears the inscription: 'Meinem geliebten Freund und Meister Dr. Richard Strauss gewidmet', and bears a motto from Goethe's *Faust*:

Wer immer strebend sich bemüht, den können wir erlösen.

Berlioz and Strauss, the *Te Deum* and the Gothic tradition, all embodied in a great mass of instrumental tone and multiple counterpoint! (There are sixteen true vocal parts in the *Judex* of Brian's *Te Deum*.) It could hardly be expected that anyone would seriously contemplate its performance, especially as its nearest approach—Berlioz's *Requiem*—had for long been a laughing-stock, derided as the quintessence of musical megalomania. 'Berlioz's idea of hell', said the wits, 'a mile of trombones and an acre of kettledrums.' Yet when Sir Hamilton Harty performed this work in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, with the Hallé Orchestra and Chorus, and four famous Lancashire brass bands, the bluff of the wits was called, for the *Requiem* had its merits.

Sir Hamilton Harty went further. He saw the score of Brian's *Gothic Symphony* and actually had in mind a performance of that work, when from an almost unimaginable quarter came disaster. The B.B.C. decided to form an orchestra of a standard of excellence to compare with any abroad—a worthy enough object—but in doing so they drew the best players from every other orchestra in the country, and so great was the exodus of players from Manchester that Sir Hamilton Harty shortly afterwards resigned his post as conductor of the Hallé Orchestra, and with him went Brian's first hope of a performance of his *Gothic Symphony*.

This might have been the end of the symphony's adventures, had it not been that Dr. Cranz, the present American head of the continental publishing house of that name, had seen Brian's unpublished scores. Dr. Cranz had the courage of his convictions; he undertook the publication of all Brian's works that remained in manuscript. These included *The Tigers*, *The Gothic Symphony*, and a number of smaller works dating from 1924, all of which are indicative of the change that had come over Brian during his residence in Sussex. The pre-war compositions had been effective concert pieces with strong inclinations to realism and to burlesque humour, turning to satire in his rebellious years during the war. But time had mellowed his thoughts, and his music took on a more abstract character with the realization that his serious com-

positions were unlikely to be appreciated by the publishing houses or the public. His mind became more introspective, and his music such as would satisfy his own deepening respect for musical craftsmanship. There came, therefore, in 1924, two *Preludes and Fugues* for pianoforte, in C minor and D minor, and a *Double Fugue* in E flat, three choral canons in four parts to words by Hannah More, an Introit, and a canonic setting of Alexander Pope's *The Dying Christian to his Soul*. The remaining short piece was a *Legend* for violin and pianoforte. These were trials of strength for the greater abstract works he had in mind.

These coincided with a deepening of his thoughts in all directions. Gone was the old admiration for iconoclasm as an end in itself (never very firmly held); now he found himself drawn towards the need for a better understanding of essentials. Much of his time was spent in the British Museum browsing amongst the original scores of Handel's early operas, Spontini's *Olympia*, the operas of J. C. Bach, some little-known scores of Schubert's friend Lachner, and finding a special interest in the life of Hugo Pierson—an Englishman who exiled himself to Germany in order to be among people more sympathetic towards his music. His admiration for Goethe deepened, particularly for *Faust* and *Götz von Berlichingen*. The latter he had in mind throughout 1930, in a period of intense creative effort that resulted in the composition of his *Symphony in E minor*, No. 3. (The *Gothic* is Symphony No. 2, leaving No. 1 for the early *Fantastic Symphony*, of which only the head and tail remain.) The *Symphony in E minor* was started in June and finished on September 1st, 1930. It has no programme, but the four movements are associated in the composer's mind with various aspects of the character of Götz. The first, his resolution: the second, his domestic piety and love of his children: the third, the smell of battle; and the fourth, his death. (It may be noted here that all the large symphonies of Brian's late period have solemn endings.) The speed at which Brian's mind worked during the composition of this symphony can be seen from a record of dates. The first movement, in three sections: *Adagio solenne*; *Allegro assai*; *piu Lento e semplice*, was composed in a single day—August 17th; the second movement, *Andante sostenuto e molto espressivo* was actually the first to be written, being started in June and finished in July. The third and fourth movements, *Allegro assai* and *Lento Maestoso* were composed between August 17th and September 1st. The score is for a large orchestra, especially the third movement, where the forces are enlarged to include 16 horns and 4 pianofortes. This symphony also was assigned to Cranz in 1932.

Dr. Cranz got to work at once on the publication of the vocal score of *The Tigers* and the full score of the *Gothic Symphony*. It

cost a small fortune to engrave the plates of the latter. Together with printing the music went schemes for performance: it was proposed to stage *The Tigers* at a London theatre—probably Drury Lane—and Fritz Busch agreed to produce the opera at the Statoper at Dresden.

That was in 1932.

In 1933 the New Order came to Germany; Herr Busch fled to Sweden, and Cranz suspended publication without any explanation.

Fortunately the score of the *Gothic Symphony* had already been printed when the change of policy took place, and copies were available at their London branch. All attempts to obtain a performance, however, failed. As for *The Tigers*, little hope remained for opera in this country after the Beecham Opera Company collapsed in London in 1920, while in the provinces even the once-popular Carl Rosa Opera Company¹ went into liquidation about the same time. Outstanding at this time was the success of Rutland Boughton's *The Immortal Hour* at the Queen's Theatre—the only British opera (apart from Gilbert and Sullivan) to be favourably received since the poet Bunn's revival of the middle nineteenth century.

In the midst of this perplexity there came a single flash of humour, and possibly also of truth. On his way home from his research work, Brian called in at a small hotel near the British Museum, called 'The Mascot'. There a man sat with his wife talking about the decline of opera in England. His name was Charles Manners—the founder of an opera company which as a boy Havergal Brian had seen come into being in those weeks of rehearsal under the second Eugene Goossens at the Queen's Theatre in Longton. 'Does opera pay?' asked Manners, and answered it himself—'Opera could not help but pay if you performed it in the provinces. But if you want to lose all you've made, then take Drury Lane Theatre and perform it to a London audience—you will be sure to lose it.' In proof of this he produced his bank pass book. £9,000 stood to his credit. 'That's the answer,' he said, 'and it would have been more if I'd had the sense to keep out of London.'

And to show the reason why British opera had once been popular in the provinces, he sang the bass song 'Drinking', as he had sung it thousands of times as an encore to Saturday night audiences; down-down-down in the last phrase, with a tone like a Stradivarius cello. His wife, the indefatigable Fanny Moody, accompanied him on the piano.

The Moody-Manners Opera Company's success was founded principally on the British working-man's fondness for the operatic

¹ It was reorganized on a more modest scale by H. B. Phillips.

style of the poet Bunn. It is a style that was for long held up to ridicule by superior people—and they were right in their opinion—but when at last they succeeded in influencing public opinion so far that *Maritana* and *The Bohemian Girl* ceased to be sufficiently remunerative to pay for the empty seats on Wagner nights, the provincial opera companies had to close down or else cut expenses to such an extent that their productions were a mere ghost of their former selves. Only the 'operas' of Gilbert and Sullivan remained a paying proposition. This decline had taken place during Brian's lifetime.

As with opera, so with choral music. No longer was a new work sung into popularity in spite of the critics, as *Gerontius* had been, by provincial choirs who knew what they wanted. Except for a few enlightened centres, provincial taste lay still, chained to the rocks of *Gerontius* and *Messiah*, and subjected as the poet Bunn had been to the perpetual gnaw of enlightened opinion. Elgar, loaded with honours, emerged from the war years a prophet with a multitude of worshippers but not a single disciple. Gone was the old ardour; from being an inspiring leader he had come to be an impressive figurehead.

Yet Elgar, on that cold October morning in 1896, dressed in a fluffy woollen suit, nervous, as Edward Lloyd stood up to sing *And King Olaf Heard the Cry*, the faltering of the orchestra, and Willy Hess, the fiery-eyed, springing like a cat to his feet and whipping the orchestra into life with a few flicks of his bow—Elgar in those days had loved the simple people who sang his music, and had been loved in return. Was all this so very uncouth? Surely people who would work nine or ten hours a day in the mines and factories and then devote four evenings a week to rehearsals had a right to enjoy their own choice of programme? Let those who wanted daintier fare have it—and pay for it.

Willy Hess? He had taken Joachim's old post at Cologne Conservatoire. He would not have changed. Brian wrote to him, saying that he had in mind an article for *Musical Opinion* and would Hess send a photograph for reproduction? It came. But gone was the old fire from his eyes. Dull they were from the drudgery of years of academic life. So had the world set its mark on all that was once so virile, while nightly the starch and ceremony of the modern concert-hall turned the most intimately human of all arts into a social rite. Let the leader of a modern orchestra stand up at his desk, and what would happen?

Bantock was still in Birmingham, but his works were strangely neglected. Had he made the mistake of pouring new wine into old vessels? Back in 1914 he had said: 'It is largely to the working class that I look for the most interesting developments of music in this country. Choral music is in their hands, and there are

certain indications that lead me to suppose that orchestral music also will in the near future receive an impetus from their endeavours. But in this latter department the economic question is largely important; musical instruments are costly, and the training required to play them can be obtained only by large expenditure of money.' But what of the choral symphonies, *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Vanity of Vanities*? Harry Evans died, and many another too, who could have helped to establish a new form of music advancing from, but still in keeping with, our British choral tradition. Brian himself had gone the opposite way—to the opera and the mammoth orchestra that had no place in the traditions of musical Britain, yet Bantock encouraged him still, and championed him on occasion.

We had gone into the war a strong and confident race: we had come out of it a race of hesitant apologists. Before the war Mr. Charles Coburn swung his cane, tipped his hat at a jaunty angle, and strolled along the Bois de Boulogne with an independent air; now, over a wail of saxophones the popular singer crooned 'Somebody stole my girl'. What a race of heroes!

In Germany things were different; they had a tradition for orchestral music. Even small towns like Weimar and Meiningen had permanent orchestras, and vast sums were devoted by the State to subsidize opera; and this went on through the extremely difficult period of inflation following the Great War. In comparison with the British official policy of taxing the gross receipts of musical enterprises, the Germans showed themselves in a favourable light, and Brian could not ignore the facts. He was an Englishman, and nobody wished more ardently than he to see British art established firmly in public favour, but in comparison with the Germans we were artistically a backward people. Like the Puritan Cavaliers of the Cromwellian era, Brian was bound by loyalty to his own people, but he would have preferred to be in the other camp. He kept in touch with continental affairs by reading their newspapers, and kept the readers of *Musical Opinion* up to date with musical developments abroad. His love of Goethe, too, led him to subscribe to the *Goethe Calendar*, edited by Dr. Ernst Beutler and issued from the Goethe Museum at Frankfurt-am-Main. This he received each year until 1932.

When in 1933 his *Goethe Calendar* did not arrive, Brian wrote to Dr. Beutler reminding him that he was expecting it. He had a courteous reply saying that publication of the book had been transferred to a Leipzig firm. This firm had a London office near the British Museum, at which Brian decided to call. He was received by a charming and very capable German lady, who asked him if he was a member of the trade; on receiving a negative reply, the lady explained that her firm could not deal with private

customers, and Brian should place his order with a retail firm. Brian was rather mystified because the book was not the sort of thing the bookselling trade handled—it was a scholarly publication sent to individual subscribers.

Enlightenment came in time. Among the newspapers to which Brian subscribed was the *Berliner Tageblatt*. Its Sunday edition contained several pages of news of artistic events throughout Germany. Gradually the space devoted to this news got less and less, and such information as appeared became almost valueless, being written in a colourless manner on events of little importance. The signs led to only one conclusion. The German public was being gulled into crazy nationalist theories not unlike some that had gained credence in the earlier war years. Again, it seemed, the vultures were gathering to feed on the fast-dying body of truth. This was happening, too, in a country for which Brian had had the greatest respect up to this time. He knew, of course, the danger of some Nazi doctrines—the attempts at suppression of the Jewish contribution to German culture, for example—and he could understand that the works of Heine would be banned because he was a Jew; but Goethe! Goethe was not a Jew, and his works were not officially banned, but evidently they were unnecessary for the development of the mentality that was to characterize the New Order in Germany.

Must it ever be thus? Must the arts of peace be forever doomed to suffer restraint, mockery, even attempted extermination, in order to facilitate the propagation of some plausible excuse for bellicose adventure? Brian had seen once already a promising art-stream turned—in Brian's view, misdirected—by a period of barbarism. These events could not overtake society without humanity paying the penalty, and the penalty was a loss of faith in one's ideals, a seeking after a new, unknown, theory of life and beauty, apparently to be created out of nothing, leaving civilization weak in its faith, and all the more ready to follow some fantastic exposition of a new order.

The economic and political causes and reactions that make new orders acceptable had no interest for Brian: he thought in terms of personalities. For that reason, perhaps, he had not turned his attention to the New World. Meeting Eugene Goossens one day in London, however, he mentioned his *Gothic Symphony*, and later got Dr. Cranz to send a copy of the scores through his London agent to Eugene Goossens at Cincinnati. A reply was received which opened up a view previously ignored, that in the New World musical events were making progress independent of European trends, but that the dread hand of economic reaction to world affairs had reached out even to the United States. The letter is dated 23rd October 1934, and runs:

DEAR MR. MICHAUD,

'It is now some time since I have had the scores of Havergal Brian's "Gothic Symphony" in my possession and I imagine that both he and you would welcome some definite news regarding prospects for this work. I will not weary you here with my opinion of the work save to state that in all sincerity I consider it an outstanding masterpiece. From the moment I laid eyes on the work I had every intention of seizing the first opportunity to present it to the American public, if possible in a first performance in America. As I told Havergal Brian when last we met over a year ago in England, I proposed presenting the work at our great biennial May Festival in 1935, where we have a chorus of 800 and a large and distinguished audience drawn from all over the country. I stated my intention to the committee who, in spite of the fact that the name of Havergal Brian is completely unknown over here, placed sufficient confidence in my judgement to approve my choice. But, alas, it was another story when I entered into the details of instruments and extra orchestras required. I need hardly tell you that this country has recently endured and is still enduring a financial depression which has affected everything, and music has unfortunately suffered to a very great degree. The consequence is that for the first time in our history, we find ourselves with funds so depleted in comparison to former seasons, that next season's Festival will, financially speaking, have to be run on lines of the strictest economy. So that whereas three years ago I was enabled to demand 12 or 14 rehearsals for the Mahler 8th Symphony, to-day I find myself compelled to hesitate before engaging even an extra orchestra of wood-winds. It is, therefore, a painful but none the less evident fact that the last movement of the "Gothic Symphony" with its formidable array of extra instrumentalists (which even in times of prosperity will always militate against its performance) puts the work outside the pale of consideration so far as next Festival is concerned. It has been suggested to me by many people that the last movement can be played with considerably reduced numbers. I do not agree, and, moreover, when the work is presented in this country it must be presented in its original form or not at all. Its presentation in a skeleton form might easily imperil its chances of success, for the great effect of the work is made by that mighty accumulation of massed orchestras and chorus in the final movement. For Brian's sake, therefore, I would not consent to any curtailed performance.

'Were I to give the work in such a version, I could never square my musical conscience.

'The position, therefore, is that the committee feels it is not justified in entering upon the tremendous financial outlay entailed in the presentation of the last movement, alone, in the symphony. Should matters readjust themselves in 1937, they would be willing to reconsider the work. In any event, as I am deprived of the means of presenting the work in adequate version, I have been compelled much against my will to abandon the projected performance. I was much looking forward to it and I need hardly tell you that my old friendship for Brian was not the least factor in my determination to mount the work in spite of all difficulties.

'In view of this inevitable contingency, I have taken matters into my own hands and have forwarded the scores to the one man in America with both the musical vision and the necessary resources at his disposal to enable him to give the work an adequate presentation. I refer to Serge Koussevitzky of the Boston Symphony, to whom I have written a long letter urging him to present the work at the earliest opportunity. I urged him to do this not only because of the sensation it would produce in performance and the credit and publicity that would accrue to him automatically, as the introducer of a work of this magnitude; but also because, musically speaking, the work itself is sterling enough to warrant the lavishing upon it of all the resources at the disposal of an organization such as the Boston Symphony. I now await Mr. Koussevitzky's answer, and I am hoping very much that the work will appeal to him so strongly that he will immediately decide to give it its adequate and proper presentation in Boston. I hope this step meets with your approval and, of course, Havergal Brian's as well. Failing the performance which, under ordinary conditions we would give it in Cincinnati, I can imagine no other group so well fitted to produce it, as the Boston orchestra and chorus. As soon as I hear from Mr. Koussevitzky I will let you know. Please assure my good friend, Brian, of my genuine regret and chagrin at being compelled to abandon a premier, which, for so many months past, I have looked forward to having the honour and pleasure of presenting to the American public.

'Believe me, and with kindest regards,

'Yours very sincerely,

'EUGENE GOOSSENS'

THE LAST PHASE

THE New World's best-known contribution to music is undoubtedly jazz. But jazz is only one musical manifestation of the peculiar economic conditions of modern America. The experience of rapidly expanding markets that distinguished British history during the Victorian and Edwardian eras continued in the U.S.A. throughout the war years and the nineteen-twenties, and, moreover, the social complications inseparable from immigration still continue to bring their influence to bear on the development of American life. These forces, combined with the power of the industrial magnate, are bringing about an artistic renaissance in that country in keeping with its new social structure. Every American city has rich men who are sufficiently interested in its prestige to endow it with cultural institutions—libraries, parks, opera houses, concert halls, universities and, in particular, symphony orchestras; they come into being very often more as a result of a desire to compete with other cities in the display of wealth and generosity than to supply an existing cultural demand, but once in being their character begins to develop according to local needs and opportunities.

Immigration to the U.S.A. is interlinked with industrial policy. From Europe pours a mixed stream of people—Germans, Italians, Poles, Czechs, Russians, Scandinavians, &c., refugees from political oppression, religious oppression, or just redundant population. They enter the U.S.A. on the Eastern side and find employment generally in the Eastern states, displacing the previously established workers there because they are prepared to accept a lower standard of living than American workers. The drift of American population is therefore westward to-day even as it was in the pioneer years of the nineteenth century. These immigrants bring with them European cultural traditions, but they yearn to become good Americans. They find, say, in Pittsburg, employment in the steel sheds, and in their moments of home-sickness long for the music of their native lands. The Pittsburg Symphony Orchestra attracts them. But the Pittsburg Symphony Orchestra, like the immigrants, is striving to be American. As a result of the character of the population, therefore, new compositions are constantly being produced reflecting European influences as well as the old native Indian and negro bases advocated by Dvořák. These artistic tendencies are much the same as those which produced jazz, but they are being encouraged in their early stages by respectable citizens, instead of being driven underground as Alderman Sidney Story drove the slum music of New Orleans.

The result is a growing school of American music of a serious nature, not, as in the case of jazz, commercially exploited and exported, but designed for American consumption and reflecting that country's artistic ambitions.

Such work is being done under the guidance of Eugene Goossens at Cincinnati, where he is able to look back on a performance of a gigantic work like Mahler's 8th Symphony, and seriously contemplate a performance of Havergal Brian's *Gothic*. Nor is Cincinnati peculiar in this respect: Goossens refers to the immense resources of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Other illustrations may be drawn from Los Angeles, where the natural amphitheatre of Hollywood Bowl and the presence of an affluent entertainment industry are contributing factors, and Washington, D.C., which, being a government centre, has a social life of its own. Here it is no uncommon sight to see the bridge over the Potomac River illuminated at midnight with thousands of coloured lights; cars glide quietly by, for a local regulation prohibits the sounding of horns on the bridge or for half a mile on each side of it during musical performances. The large orchestra is ranged on a barge in the middle of the Potomac, and the river-banks, both on the Columbia and Virginia sides, are lined with thousands of listeners.

Such conditions do not exist in Great Britain, and it cannot therefore be expected that the type of music composed for these events will be acceptable in this country. British musical taste has been built on Church music, folk-song, and a long choral tradition. Orchestral music and opera are importations from Europe, the latter of which seems to have had its days, and the former of which is now rapidly developing along lines in keeping with modern ideas, but in revolt against the sonorities of the pre-war period. Modern music may be astringent, rhythmically original, polyphonic, polytonal, atonal, but at all costs it must avoid classical and romantic clichés; a mastery of orchestral effect cannot alone satisfy modern taste, nor can an exploitation of sonority.

This renunciation of sonority as an out-worn fashion is about the only thing that can be said to find general agreement among advanced musicians to-day. The orchestra has become a flexible instrument, having more in common with the spirit of Thomas Morley's madrigal—'You may shew the verie uttermost of your varietie, and the more varietie you shew the better shall you please'—than in the grand masses of harmony that appealed to British choral enthusiasts from Handel right on to Elgar. It is a point of view emanating from the highly-trained artistic mind, and not, as the sonorous works were, from minds in touch with the common people. Were this modern highly artistic British music to rely on the support of audiences up and down the country

for its initial acceptance (as Elgar's did) it is unlikely that it would have found the favour with which it is now received, but it has had a novel medium of mechanical dissemination that the older works had not, and it so happens that this modern music is more suited to the microphone and the loud-speaker than is, say, the 'Hallelujah Chorus'. Modern music can be played in London, where it has a measure of support sufficient to attract an appreciative audience, and be broadcast simultaneously throughout the country. Gradually this policy is having its effect, and modern music is gaining converts throughout the land.

This process is just the opposite of that obtaining before the Great War, when orchestras were at a disadvantage because the few of them that existed had to travel to reach audiences outside their home towns, thus running up costs that made such visits uneconomical, while the local choral society could present a good-sized and often well-trained choir singing music more acceptable to local audiences than a visiting orchestra, because such music was either familiar to them, or had been written with an understanding of their demands.

Havergal Brian belonged to the common people. With them he learned to love the power of sonorous choral and orchestral effect. However much modern taste may go in the direction of purely instrumental music, the greatest themes have always demanded vocal parts in addition to an orchestra complete according to the resources of its period, and seem likely to continue to do so, whatever fashion may decree or the microphone encourage. It so happens, however, that Brian's development has gone contrary to popular taste. At the time when the people demanded sonority Brian was concerned with orchestral miniatures like the various movements of his *First English Suite*, and *Variations on an Old Rhyme*, increasing in size to the tone poems *In Memoriam* and *Doctor Merryheart*. His choral works *By the Waters of Babylon* and *The Vision of Cleopatra* were grand stuff when they were written, but a bit too strong for popular acceptance. Brian's psychological development is in keeping with that of many great artists—Shakespeare, Milton, Beethoven—in that it deepened and intensified as life went on, but public taste went the other way as a result of the war. In 1914 men were brave, in 1918 they were wise before their time; heroism was at a discount, and men sought—we know now how vainly—for some philosophy of life to replace the romantic conception of man's supremacy over nature that had upheld his self-esteem in the bad old days.

History has repeated itself so often in this respect that interesting parallels can be found in great variety. Brian has been attracted by the music of Heinrich Schutz, which he considers to be remarkable in many ways, and this composer lived through-

out the Thirty Years' War, which appears to have had the same effect on him as the 1914-18 war had on Brian, with the result that there is very little evidence surviving to point to the true facts of his life. Perhaps the simplest example from British history is in the literary sphere, in the life of John Milton, whose life-work in poetry was interrupted by the progress of the Civil War.

There is plenty of evidence that Milton had early in life an ambition to create some artistic work of lasting merit. 'By labour and intense study, which', he says, 'I take to be my portion in this life, joined with a strong propensity of nature', he might 'leave something so written to after-times as they should not willingly let it die.' As with Brian, a war separated his work into two distinct parts: first the well-wrought poems in accepted literary forms—*Comus*, *Lycidas*, *Il Penseroso*, *L'Allegro* and the early sonnets—then the long break during which he devoted his energies to the Parliamentary cause, and finally, as the result of this long period of sub-conscious germination of ideas, the great epics, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, *Samson Agonistes* and the last sonnets. By the time *Paradise Lost* came to be published, literary taste had changed so much that the poem took two years to earn the five pounds royalties due on the sale of the first edition, and it had changed as a result of ennui following an enforced peace and a period of intellectual repression. The psychological similarity to British social life since 1914 is obvious.

An interesting link between these two periods appears in the name Jacob Tonson. Jacob Tonson was the man who ultimately bought the copyright of *Paradise Lost* from Milton's widow, and it is the nom-de-plume adopted by Arnold Bennett for the excellent articles he wrote for *The New Age* before the 1914 conflict. Both Milton and Bennett were drawn into their country's quarrels in a similar capacity, Bennett in the Ministry of Information, which is a modern counterpart of Milton's post of Latin Secretary without its responsibility for foreign relations. It speaks much for the good sense of the reading public that they have allowed the official effusions of both men to sink into oblivion. But whereas Milton kept the idea of creating a great work always at the back of his mind, putting off writing it until the political situation should allow him time to do so, Bennett thought only of his craftsmanship and his output, with the result that when he tried after the war to recover his former narrative style he found that the life had gone from it, leaving only a skilful literary composition. Compare *Riceman Steps* with *The Old Wives' Tale*, and then compare *Samson Agonistes* with *Lycidas*; Bennett's work shows a decline while Milton's shows a divine enkindling.

Oppressive as the atmosphere of war may be, therefore, to an artist, it is a testing period rather than a stultifying period.

Goethe and Beethoven lived through the Napoleonic wars. Brian's emotional reaction against the fallacious reasoning of the war years preserved his artistic spirit for the epic works that were to come. The *Gothic Symphony* was the first of these, but despite its magnitude Brian had not quite settled to his true style. The Straussian features that had begun to appear in his work before the war—in *Doctor Merryheart*—are still too much in evidence, even going so far as the employment of a thunder machine, bird-scare and chains; the use of instruments like the oboe d'amore and the corno di bassetto, however, was destined to lead to a useful contribution to orchestral technique, for in the symphonies that followed, Brian settled down to an orchestra complete in all its sections from bass to treble, so that the interlinking of clarinets and oboes from necessity instead of for effect, and the use of the bass tuba as a foundation for the three trombones, became no longer obligatory. There is a contra-bass trombone for use with the brilliance of bass and tenor trombone tone, and tenor tubas or euphoniums to go with the smoother tone of the bass tuba, and there is nothing to prevent their combination if the music demands it.

The somewhat exorbitant demands of the Symphony in E minor, with its extra horns and pianos in the third movement, give place to a large but more rational disposition of forces in the Symphony No. 4 in C sharp minor. Here again is a large work emerging from the composer's mind at high speed. The first movement *allegro moderato* was commenced on Sunday, April 12th, and finished on Whit Monday, May 23rd, 1931, the second movement *lento sempre marcato e rubato—molto sostenuto e pesante* was started on June 21st and finished on July 1st. The third movement, *allegro vivace*, occupied two days, Saturday and Sunday, July 18th and 19th, while the last movement, *lento solenne*, took four days, Sunday, July 12th to Thursday, July 16th. It is scored for 4 flutes (2 piccolos), 4 oboes (2 English horns), 4 clarinets (2 bass clarinets), 4 bassoons, 1 double bassoon, 8 horns, 4 trumpets, a full quartet of trombones (2 tenor, 1 bass and 1 contrabass), 2 bass tubas, 6 tympani, strings, 2 harps, 2 pianos and percussion. A pretty full array, but no bigger than Wagner's orchestra. This is the symphony that Sir Granville Bantock tried unsuccessfully to persuade the B.B.C. to perform.

Almost a year elapsed before the 5th Symphony began to emerge, and this turned out to be a choral one, using in addition to a large orchestra, a double chorus and soprano soloist in the finale for a setting of the 68th Psalm, 'Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered.' This, incidentally, was Cromwell's favourite psalm, and with it comes to an end the period of thought we have likened to that of the puritan cavalier, for Brian's 5th Symphony is written with an eye to a German audience, setting out the words

of the Psalm both in German and English. The first sketches were commenced on June 20th, 1932, and completed on December 4th, scoring was completed by April 29th, 1933, but before the end of that year, and before his next work came to light, Brian's faith in Germany was shattered by his disappointment at the rise of the Nazi dictatorship. He was quite unaware that this disappointment would alter the nature of his composition, but it is significant that for the next seven years his orchestral writing demanded far fewer players, and his literary inspiration was drawn from uncompromisingly British sources.

The first of these was his *Violin Concerto in C*, which was written during 1934 and 1935. It is described on the title-page as No. 2, although Concerto No. 1 can be regarded as non-existent, for it was stolen with Brian's suitcase from a train in Victoria Station, and never recovered, despite the facts that it had no negotiable value and three London newspapers advertised free of charge for its return. Brian was temporarily dumbfounded at the loss, but when it became obvious that the score would never be returned, he set to work to rewrite the whole concerto. Despite its slighter construction and the fact that it had previously been fully completed, however, the concerto took longer to write than the heavier-scored 3rd and 4th symphonies, and this is equally true of his next work, Symphony No. 6, for orchestra and baritone voice, entitled *Wine of Summer*, utilizing a singularly beautiful poem by Lord Alfred Douglas.

*My nest is all untrod and virginal,
And virginal the path that led me here,
For all along the grass grew straight and tall,
And live things rustled in the thicket near;
And briar rose stretched out to sweet briar rose
Wild slender arms, and barred the way to me
With many a flowering arch, rose pink or white,
As bending carefully,
Leaving unbroken all their blossoming bows,
I passed along, a reverent neophyte.*

*And this hour too must die, even now the sun
Droops to the sea, and with untroubled feet
The quiet evening comes: the day is done.
The air that throbbed beneath the passionate heat
Grows calm and cool and virginal again.
The colour fades and sinks to sombre tones,
As when in youthful cheeks a blush grows dim.
Hushed are the monotones
Of doves and bees, and the long flowery lane
Rustles beneath the wind in playful whim.*

Both the Violin Concerto and the 6th Symphony call for a

normal Beethoven-Tschaikovsky orchestra, with the addition of a third trumpet in the concerto and a second harp in the symphony. After the completion of the 6th Symphony in 1937 Brian composed no more until the second world war came upon us, with its consequent tragedy.

Here came another urge for composition. No less a task than a setting of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* for chorus, soloists and an orchestra even bigger than that employed for the *Gothic Symphony*. The first two acts have been completed without any cuts in the poem. Brian knows well that it has no chance of performance, but that does not deter him from the work. Therein, perhaps, lies both Brian's weakness and greatness. That Five Towns doggedness that made Whewall overcome the difficulties of *Sea Drift* and *A Mass of Life* in six months comes out again in Brian, though it is now thirty years since he left Stoke-on-Trent. It has never been satisfactorily explained, though Arnold Bennett has given it enduring publicity in the best of his novels. It would seem that in his efforts to forget the morass into which civilization has again sunk, Brian has unconsciously reached out to the most herculean task he can find. It may be that this task will never be finished, but in the attempt there lies the consolation that one is reaching out towards something beyond the ken of humanity: a spiritual essence approached through faith and communion with the divine. It is at once the greatness and the weakness of the Romantic movement that the artistic ideal receded into the remote hinterland of consciousness—there to be apprehended, in an occasional inspired flash, but never to be understood.

That men should be subjected to this ordeal, and not desire to escape it, is one of the mysteries of life—perhaps the greatest. In the face of this mystery what need is there to ask the lesser one, has Brian's music any future? It behoves a man to do the best he can for these children of his mind, just as he should for the children of his corporal being; to make such disposition of his works that should the time come when men will take an interest in them they will be available. The tragedy of Schubert, whose music was scattered about unheeded after his death, should be avoided by every composer, even though the call for it may never come.

Perhaps in the tragedy of Schubert may be found a key to the neglect of so many British compositions of the Edwardian era, for in his youth Havergal Brian discussed with Dr. Swinnerton Heap the strange neglect of Schubert by his contemporaries, and Heap gave what may well be an authentic answer. Heap had been told by his master, Moscheles—who was a friend of Beethoven—that Schubert was eclipsed by the Beethoven partisans.

In much the same way one can see that Bantock, Delius, Vaughan Williams, Holst, and of course lesser composers prior

to 1914, were eclipsed by the Elgar partisans; but this is not a complete answer—it still remains to ask why Beethoven and Elgar should have many partisans, and Schubert and Bantock few?

The answer lies in the trend of public favour. People will applaud a character in whom they see an embodiment of that type towards which they are striving. Voltaire put it simply when he said, 'God created man in His own image, and man has been returning the compliment ever since.' Beethoven was the embodiment of the new romantic ideal. 'Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains', Rousseau had said, and the French Revolution had followed. Here in Vienna was a man whose mind triumphed over every physical and material difficulty—Beethoven, Deaf Prophet of the Immortal Soul of Music. The quiet, unassuming Schubert could not be identified with the spirit of the age except by intelligent people who knew his music—and how boring for Society to have to know a modern composer's music!

Just as Beethoven rose on the tide of popular romanticism, so Elgar rose on the tide of popular oratorio. In the second half of the nineteenth century the lot of the common people was slowly improving, but material welfare (and this is a striking fact) came slower than religious and musical attainment. In their desire for music, being unable to pay others, the workers were thrown on their own devices, and so to vocal music. Religious leaders helped with organization and sympathetic employers and municipal leaders gave their support. This was the state of musical life in Brian's childhood, illustrated by the work of the enthusiastic schoolmaster at St. James's, Longton, the pottery manufacturer, Aidney, who ran the penny singing-class, and the town clerk, Hawley, with his enthusiasm for brass bands. With such ardour did people pursue music-making that by 1880 choral singing had reached a degree of achievement sufficient to provide the means by which first-rate modern composers could express themselves. Elgar rose to fame on this wave of enthusiasm and through recognition by these people. (The appreciation of Elgar's music by the Germans had a negligible effect on provincial centres—it was a clash of opinions in print that had little influence outside London, where appreciation of Elgar came last of all.)

It needed no propaganda to establish Elgar. When Havergal Brian heard for the first time the harmonies of *King Olaf* sounding into the street from the rehearsal room, he stopped in his steps, enthralled. Neither he nor anyone else who heard that music needed to be told that it filled a need only too scantily supplied up to that time. Propaganda completely failed to establish Perosi, and although it prompted Brian to urge Arthur Bailey to recommend Parry's *Job* to his choir, the result was the same—the choir and audience were bored. Parry and his disciples were reformers,

whereas Elgar was a believer in his age; in its weakness, as well as in its strength. Later in life Elgar seemed to drift away from these early friends—though their love for him never faltered—but the explanation lies in the fact that his muse was leading him away from oratorio towards the orchestra and chamber music, into which spheres the provincial choral societies could only with difficulty follow him. Cold he may have appeared, but he was not an artistic snob. Side by side with his great works went the 'unworthy' ones, the *Starlight Express*, *The Nursery Suite* and the *Severn Suite*, and whatever criticism may be aimed at Elgar for these, it is difficult to sustain a charge of snobbery against a great man who can still deign to write music to please children (whether Royal children or commoners) and the working man with his fondness for the brass band.

No doubt it seemed to Brian, and to others, that Elgar had deserted the cause when, loaded with honours, he grew aloof—that he had left them, like Browning's *Lost Leader*, 'just for a ribband to stick in his coat'. It took a long time for others to realize that Elgar thought *he* had been deserted. In Brian's case understanding came with the years. His last meeting with Elgar was at a public function, where Brian was thankful that an eye complaint obliged him to wear dark glasses, for Elgar looked like a retired brigadier. Later, however, came the reaction. Elgar was dead, and Brian, calling on a friend, found him clearing out his study. A pocket score of *Falstaff* came to light.

'Would you like this, Brian? I don't suppose I shall want it again.'

Brian took the score, feeling as though the man had struck him. Was this, then, to be the end of the things he believed in, and for which he and his friends had striven?

But in his very greatness Elgar held up much good musical work in Britain. Not until he had retired from original composition did such men as Delius, Holst, Vaughan Williams and Arnold Bax come into their own. Like Schubert, they had been eclipsed by the partisans of a contemporary. Their work, and that of those following them, has been held up too long, and must now take its course. With them came mechanical inventions for the distribution of music such as have had no parallel in art since the invention of printing, and, as we have seen, this new medium operates less in favour of the old pre-war sonority than of the new music. Particularly does it discourage performance of such music as Brian had written in his later years.

With these new machines has come a change in the taste of the consumer. No longer is it necessary for John Citizen to make his own entertainment; he now has a surfeit of it, and takes the easiest course by patronizing that which offers most enjoyment for least exertion. Gone is the fighting spirit of the old days.

Brian is out of touch with his times, and he never was satisfied with the artistic life of this country. Germany no longer appears in the same favourable light as formerly, and Brian is forced into acceptance of Goethe's philosophy implied at the end of *Faust*: that material considerations and human behaviour matter little—only the things of the mind have permanence and value, and his summing-up of life has in his later years come to be almost identical with that expressed in the dedicatory lines of Goethe's *Faust*:

*Ah! of my songs they may not hear the latter,
Those souls for whom mine earlier songs were sung;
Scattered the friendly throng as mist-wreaths scatter!
Mute the first echo as a harp unstrung!
I sing to strangers, and when they would flatter,
E'en by their very cheers mine heart is wrung;
And if there live whom once my song delighted,
In the wide world they wander disunited.*

*There seizes me a long unwonted yearning
For yonder silent, solemn spirit-realm;
My faltering, fitful song is tuned to mourning,
A harp Aeolian in a windy elm;
A shudder seizes me, the tears throng burning,
And soft, sad thoughts my steadfast heart o'erwhelm;
All that I have, now far away seems banished,
All real grown, that long ago had vanished.*

There is little hope that public taste in this country will veer round in favour of Brian's music in the near future. The tendency is for the work of younger men to find acceptance. In two countries there would appear to be a demand for the old sonorities: in Russia, where there is reaction against the pre-war Russo-French School that weaned the British from German influence, and in the U.S.A., where there is a people's movement towards mass music-making that arises spontaneously, as British music did in the last century, fanned by local pride and assisted by local philanthropists. In either of those countries Brian might find acceptance, but it is fairly obvious, after twenty years of neglect, that there is no hope for him in Britain.

And yet he has carried out his work sincerely, and borne his disappointment with a stoicism that cannot but bring admiration to those who have seen it. Shelley's sentiments, expressed in the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, never had more force than with reference to the life of this man:

'Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them: if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion on his efforts; the pile they raise will betray his grave which might otherwise have been unknown.'

COMPOSITIONS OF HAVERGAL BRIAN

| <i>Title</i> | <i>Specification</i> | <i>Words</i> | <i>Publisher</i> | <i>Remarks</i> |
|--|--|----------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Songs: I Shot an Arrow | Voice and Piano | Longfellow | — | Lost |
| Wanderers' Night Song | " " | Goethe | — | " |
| To-day and To-morrow | " " | Gunby Hadath | — | " |
| Requiem | Baritone Solo, Chorus (S.A.T.B.) and Orchestra | Hymns A. & M. } New Testament | — | " |
| Pantalon and Columbine | Short Symphonic Movement for Small Orchestra | — | — | } Now Movements 2 and 3 of First English Suite Lost |
| Tragic Prelude | Large Orchestra | — | — | |
| Songs: Sorrow Song | Voice and Piano | Samuel Daniel | Chesters (B. & H.) | — |
| The Message | " " | John Donne | " | — |
| Farewell | " " | Bishop Heber | Cranz " | Not yet issued |
| The Lord is My Shepherd | Tenor Solo, Chorus (S.A.T.B.) and Orchestra | Psalm 23 | — | — |
| For Valour | Orchestra (6 horns) | — | Breitkopf & Härtel | — |
| Concert Overture | " " | — | — | — |
| By the Waters of Babylon | { Baritone Solo, Chorus (S.A.T.B.) and Orchestra | Psalm 137 | " " | } Performed in Hanley 1908, and Liverpool 1909 |
| First English Suite | Full Orchestra | — | " " | |
| Symphonic Poem ('Hero and Leander') | " " | — | — | Performed by Beecham in Hanley 1908. Score lost |
| Shall I compare thee to a Summer's Day | Part-song (S.A.T.B. unaccompanied) | Shakespeare | Breitkopf & Härtel | Out of print |
| Stars of the Summer Night | Part-song (S.S.A.A.T.T.B.B. unaccompanied) | Longfellow | Novello | Test piece at Blackpool Festival 1908 |
| Songs: Day and Night | Voice and Piano | Gerald Cumberland | Chesters | — |
| When I Lie Still | " " | " | " | — |
| If I Could Speak | " " | " | " | — |
| A Faery Song | " " | Yeats | " | — |
| Soliloquy upon a Dead Child | " " | Gerald Cumberland | " | — |

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| <i>Title</i> | <i>Specification</i> | <i>Words</i> | <i>Publisher</i> | <i>Remarks</i> |
|---|--|-------------------|--------------------|--|
| Soul Star | Part-song (S.A.T.B.) unacc. | Helen F. Bantock | Bosworth | Barrow-in-Furness Music Festival 1907 |
| Lullaby of an Infant Chief | " " " | Byron | Breitkopf & Härtel | " " 1908 |
| Come O'er the Sea | " " " | Moore | " " | " " 1909 |
| Rondel, 'In a Fairy Boat' | " (S.S.C.C.) " | Bernard Weller | " " | — |
| Tell Me, Thou Soul of Her I Love | " (S.A.T.B.) " | Thomson | Novello | — |
| A Vision of Cleopatra (Cantata) | Four Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra | Gerald Cumberland | Bosworth | — |
| Fantastic Variations on an Old Rhyme | Orchestra | — | Breitkopf & Härtel | } Originally 1st and 3rd Movements of a Fantastic Symphony |
| Festal Dance | " | — | " " | |
| Fairies' Song | Part-song (S.S.A.A.) unaccompanied | Gerald Cumberland | Novello | Blackpool Music Festival 1908 |
| Why Dost Thou Wound and Break my Heart? | Voice and Piano | Herrick | Chesters | — |
| A Night Piece | " " | " | " | — |
| The Mad Maid's Song | " " | " | " | — |
| Daybreak | Part-song (S.A.T.B.) unacc. | Longfellow | Novello | Principal Test-piece Midland Musical Festival 1911 |
| Symphonic Poem 'In Memoriam' | Orchestra | — | Breitkopf & Härtel | — |
| Comedy Overture 'Doctor Merryheart' | " | — | " " | } First Performance Birmingham 1913 London 1913 |
| Songs: Go, Lovely Rose | } Part-songs (S.S.C.C.) with Orchestra | Herrick | MS. | |
| Requiem for a Rose | | | — | |
| The Hag | 2 Part-song (S.C.) and Piano | Herrick | Curwen | — |
| Grace for a Child | " " " | Emerson | " | — |
| The Mountain & the Squirrel | " " " | Shakespeare | " | — |
| Ye Spotted Snakes | Part-song (S.S.C.C.) unacc. | Anon. | " | — |
| He was a Rat | " (S.A.T.B.) " | " | " | — |
| Summer has Come | " (S.C.) and Piano | Cumberland | " | — |

141

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Specification</i> |
|-------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1914 | The Little Black Boy | Voice and Piano |
| | The Chimney Sweeper | " " |
| | The Blossom | " " |
| | Piping Down the Valleys | " " |
| | Wild | " " |
| | The Lost Doll | " " |
| | The Lamb | S.S.C and Piano |
| | And Will he not come again | S.S.C.C. " |
| | The Moon | S.C. " " |
| | The River | S.C. " " |
| | The Little Boy Lost | S.C. " " |
| | The Little Boy Found | S.C. " " |
| | If I had but two little Wings | S.C. " " |
| | A Song of Willow | S.C. " " |
| | Little White Lily | S.S.C. " " |
| | Violets | " " " |
| | Laughing Song | " " " |
| | Infant Song | " " " |
| | Pastoral: The Shepherd | " " " |
| | Spring—Sound the Flute | " " " |
| | The Dream | " " " |
| | The Echoing Green | " " " |
| | The Fairy Palace | " " " |
| | The Fly | " " " |
| | A Child's Prayer | Voice and Piano |
| | Second English Suite | S.C. " " |
| | Burlesque Opera— "The Tigers" | Orchestra |
| 1916-18 | | — |
| 1918 | When the Sun goes Down | Voice and Piano |
| | On Parting | " " " |
| | Love is a Merry Game | " " " |
| | Renunciation | " " " |
| | Lady Ellayne | " " " |
| | The Defiled Sanctuary | " " " |

142

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Specification</i> |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1918 | The Phantom Wooer | S.A.T.B.B. unaccompanied |
| | The Land of Dreams | Voice and Piano |
| 1919 | The Birds | " " " |
| | On a Poet's Lips I Slept | " " " |
| | Music When Soft Voices Die | " " " |
| | Call for the Robin Redbreast | " " " |
| | Pack Clouds Away | S.S.C. " " |
| | Absence | S.S.C.C. unaccompanied |
| | Under the Greenwood Tree | S.S.A. " " |
| | Spring, the Sweet Spring | S.A. " " |
| | It was a Lover and his Lass | S.S.A. " " |
| | Fear no more the heat of the Sun | S.A.T.B. unaccompanied |
| | When Icicles hang by the Wall | Voice and Piano |
| | Ahl County Guy | " " " |
| | Fair Pledges of a Fruitful Tree | S.A. " " |
| | Sonnet—"My Lute" | Voice and Piano |
| | To Daffodils | S.A. " " |
| | Blow, blow, thou Winter Wind | S.A.T.B. unaccompanied |
| | Tell me, Where is Fancy Bred? | S.S.A.A. and Piano |
| | Come away, Death | T.T.B.B. and Piano |
| | Mine be a Cot beside the Hill | S.A. and Piano |
| | Take, O take those Lips Away | Voice and Piano |
| 1919 | Sonnet: 'Care-Charmer Sleep' | " " " |
| | Third English Suite | Orchestra |
| 1919 | Gothic Symphony | Large Orchestra and mul- tiple Chorus |
| 1921 | Fourth English Suite | Orchestra |

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| <i>Words</i> | <i>Publisher</i> | <i>Remarks</i> |
|--------------|------------------|---|
| Blake | Augener | — |
| " | " | — |
| " | " | — |
| Kingsley | " | — |
| Blake | " | — |
| Shakespeare | " | — |
| Cumberland | " | — |
| Blake | " | — |
| Coleridge | " | — |
| Shakespeare | " | — |
| G. McDonald | " | — |
| Herrick | " | — |
| Blake | " | — |
| " | " | — |
| " | " | — |
| " | " | — |
| Drayton | " | — |
| Blake | " | — |
| " | " | — |
| | | Lost |
| Brian | Cranz | Vocal score issued |
| Temple Keble | Enoch & Sons | |
| " | " | Publishing rights acquired by Ash- down & Co. |
| " | " | |
| " | " | |
| Blake | " | |

| <i>Words</i> | <i>Publisher</i> | <i>Remarks</i> |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Beddoes | Augener | — |
| Blake | " | — |
| " | " | — |
| Shelley | Enoch & Sons | |
| " | " | |
| Webster | " | — |
| Heywood | Augener | — |
| Anon. | " | — |
| Shakespeare | " | — |
| Thomas Nash | " | — |
| Shakespeare | " | — |
| " | " | — |
| Scott | Paxton | — |
| " | " | — |
| Herrick | Oxford Univ. Press | — |
| Wm. Drummond | Enoch & Sons | Not issued |
| Herrick | " | " |
| Shakespeare | MS. | " |
| " | " | " |
| " | " | " |
| Rogers | " | " |
| Shakespeare | " | " |
| Samuel Daniel | " | " |
| — | Bosworth | " |
| Te Deum (Finale) | Cranz | Score issued |
| — | Bosworth | Not issued |

| <i>Title</i> | <i>Specification</i> | <i>Words</i> | <i>Publisher</i> | <i>Remarks</i> |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|--|
| Since Love is Dead I know and You | Voice and Piano " " " | Bowles " | MS. " | — — |
| Choral Canons: O Happiness, Celestial Fair | S.A.T.B. unaccompanied | Hannah More | " | Not issued |
| Sweet Solitude | " | " | " | " |
| Shall I then be Spared | " | " | " | " |
| Introit Amen | " | — | " | " |
| The Dying Christian to his Soul | " | Alexander Pope | " | " |
| Double Fugue in E \flat | Piano Solo | — | " | " |
| Prelude and Fugue in C min. | " " | — | " | " |
| Prelude and Fugue in D maj. | " " | — | " | " |
| Legend | Violin and Piano | — | " | " |
| At Candlelight | Voice and Piano | Gunby Hadath | " | — |
| Without You | " " " | " " | " | — |
| Song of Betrothal | " " " | " " | " | — |
| Symphony No. 3 in E min. | Large Orchestra | — | " | Inspired by Goethe's 'Gotz von Berlich- ingen' |
| Symphony No. 4 in C \sharp min. | " " | — | " | — |
| Symphony No. 5 in C | Large Orchestra with Choral Finale | Psalm 68 | " | — |
| Prelude | Double Chorus and Soprano Solo | — | — | — |
| John Dowland's Fancy | Piano Solo | — | Joseph Williams | — |
| Violin Concerto No. 2 | Violin and Orchestra | — | — | Concerto No. 1 lost and rewritten |

| <i>Title</i> | <i>Specification</i> | <i>Words</i> | <i>Publisher</i> | <i>Remarks</i> |
|--|--|------------------------|------------------|--|
| Two Songs by G. F. Handel from Cantata 'Venus and Adonis' 'Dear Adonis' 'Transporting Joy' | Arranged for Voice and Piano- forte, with a preface by W. E. Smith, together with a facsimile of the original MSS. | John Hughes | Augener | Never published in Handel's time, the MSS was dis- covered in British Museum by W. E. Smith |
| Symphony No. 6— 'Wine of Summer' | Baritone Solo and Orchestra | Lord Alfred Douglas | MS. | — |
| Prometheus Unbound | Many Soloists, Chorus and Large Orchestra | Shelley | " | Completed Sept. 1944 |

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